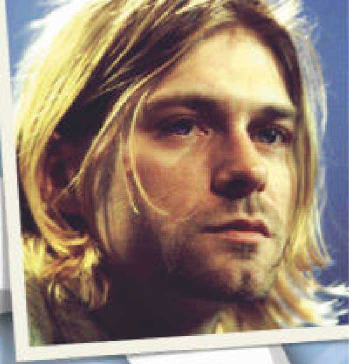
NIRVANA "BIGGER THAN THE BEATLES!"



MOJO
Music Magazine

183 REVIEWS
BEACH BOYS, VILLAGERS
GEORGE HARRISON
PRINCE, SPARKS
& MORE

HUNKY DORY
50TH ANNIVERSARY

THE RIDDLE OF DAVID BOWIE

"HE WAS LIKE A VOLCANO ABOUT TO ERUPT!"

MANIC STREET PREACHERS
30 YEARS OF "HATRED AND DELUSION"

WAR OF THE WORLDS
ROCK'S MARTIAN CHRONICLES

SPRINGSTEEN
HIS GLORY DAYS – UNSEEN!

THE HOLLIES
BRITBEAT UNDERDOGS BITE BACK!

BILL EVANS
ALL KINDS OF BLUE

+

WHEN JONI MET JIMI!

THE NEW PREVIOUSLY UNRELEASED 12 SONG STUDIO ALBUM

PRINCE

"WE MADE MUSIC WAY AHEAD OF ITS TIME ANYWAY. IT'S AS FRESH 2DAY AS EVER."

-Prince

WELCOME 2 AMERICA

PRINCE
WELCOME 2 AMERICA

DELUXE EDITION ALSO AVAILABLE

PRODUCED, ARRANGED, COMPOSED & PER4MED BY PRINCE

RELEASED 30TH JULY

12 song studio album + a complete live concert Blu-ray of **Prince & The New Power Generation** from their **"TWENTY ONE NITE STAND"** in Los Angeles, alongside a 12"12" 32-page companion book with never-before-seen photos; song lyrics; detailed liner notes; and an embossed vellum envelope containing exclusive *Welcome 2 America*-era ephemera."

THE PRINCE ESTATE

PRINCE.COM

RECORDS LEGACY

© 2021 The Prince Estate/NPG Records, Inc., manufactured and distributed by Sony Music Entertainment

CONTENTS

LONDON ✦ MEMPHIS ✦ MARS

SEPTEMBER 2021 Issue 334

Kirk Weddle, courtesy of ACC Art Books www.accartbooks.com/

> “There’s no rebellion in rock’n’roll any more… Maybe what we need is a new generation gap.”
> **KURT COBAIN, P52**

FEATURES

26 NICKY WIRE The Manic Street Preachers bassist wanted to be an ambassador, then became the worst diplomat in rock. “There was no kinship with any other band.”

32 THE HOLLIES In 1966, the Manc Beatles discovered songwriting. Cue splits, but also survival against the odds: “It’s a tough one why we aren’t more acclaimed,” they reflect.

38 FAYE WEBSTER From Atlanta, a new Southern stew of R&B, country, folk and pop, stirred by a 23-year-old prodigy with pro yo-yo skills and a “fuck-it mentality”.

42 BILL EVANS How a suburban New Jersey-ite inspired Miles, discovered the “noir life” and became the sad genius behind jazz’s most beautiful records.

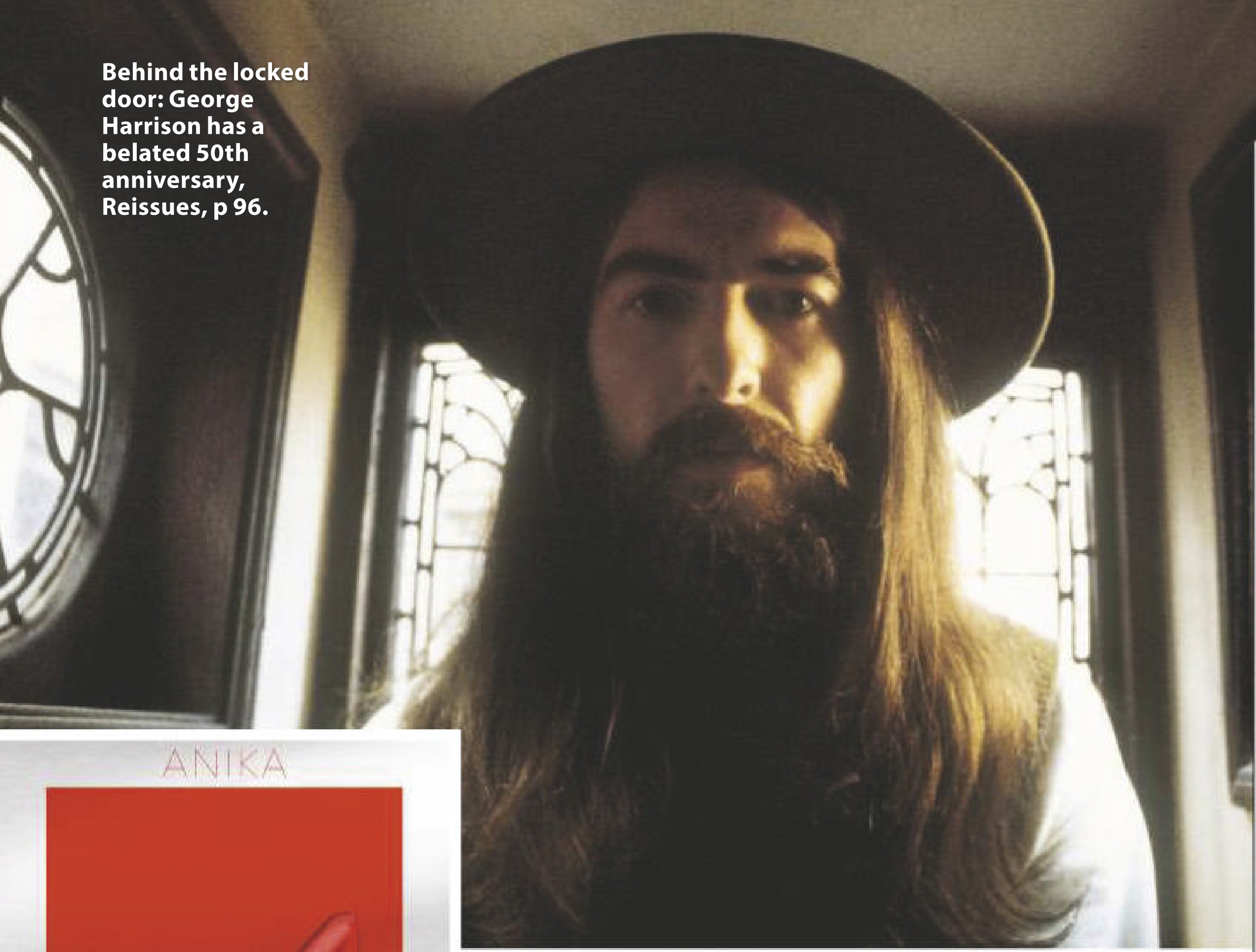
48 BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN Close-up views of the Boss (and his bum) from the lip of the stage, 1974 to 2016, many unseen, through the lens of Cleveland’s Janet Macoska.

52 NIRVANA Thirty years since its release, *Nevermind*’s revolutionary impact is ancient history. But as its makers attest, its songs still weave a magic spell.

60 WAR OF THE WORLDS How The Album That Ate The ’70s began with a Lego ad, how Slim Chunder played his part, and how its current incarnation is bittersweet for some.

COVER STORY

64 DAVID BOWIE The colourful cast of David Bowie’s 1971 reconvene – Rick Wakeman, Woody Woodmansey, George Underwood, Dana Gillespie and Tony Defries – to fathom the miraculous career-reviving coup that was *Hunky Dory*. “My God! This could actually be huge!”


Behind the locked door: George Harrison has a belated 50th anniversary, Reissues, p 96.

SPACE WALK
Don Rendell Quintet

Cooking with Gaz: The Amorphous Androgynous, MOJO Working, p16.

Do you dream in colour: Villagers, Lead Album, p76.

MOJO

REGULARS

9 **ALL BACK TO MY PLACE** Jakob Dylan, Miki Berenyi and Phil Manzanera open the floodgates to audio nirvana.

106 **REAL GONE** Jon Hassell, David R Edwards, Peter Zinovieff, Ellen McIlwaine, Gift Of Gab and more, goodnight.

112 **ASK MOJO** Who deliberately destroyed their master tapes?

114 **HELLO GOODBYE** There were drugs, squats, 200 gigs and magical chemistry. Kirk Brandon remembers Theatre Of Hate.

WHAT GOES ON!

12 **HENDRIX AND JONI – ON TAPE?** You know the story about Jimi taping Joni Mitchell in '68? It's all true. Read on for how it happened and how the lost reel was rediscovered, and what Joni herself thought when she was presented with it.

14 **ELVIS COSTELLO** DAP MacManus, OBE, has taken one of his classic albums and reframed it, with Spanish-speaking vocalists. "A really great opportunity to turn the songs on their head," he declares.

16 **THE AMORPHOUS ANDROGYNOUS** Garry Cobain has got a new record brewing, with guests including players from The Verve, Happy Mondays, VdGG and more.

19 **BRIT JAZZ: EXPLOSION** Psst – want to buy some classic UK jazz wax, but don't fancy re-mortgaging the house? Help is at hand. Plus, saxmen Alan Skidmore and John Surman recall those halcyon days.

20 **DAVID WIFFEN** The Canadian singer-songwriter – and cognoscenti's choice – resurfaces to talk road travails, fate and cult fame.

MOJO FILTER

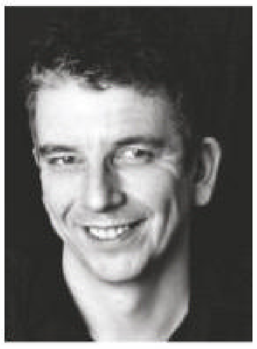
76 **NEW ALBUMS** Villagers return, plus Jackson Browne, Dot Allison, and more.

90 **REISSUES** For The Beach Boys, surf's never really up, plus George Harrison and more.

103 **SCREEN** This film ain't big enough for The Sparks Brothers, AKA Ron and Russell Mael.

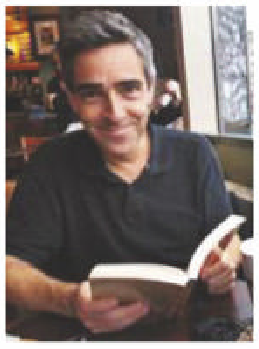
104 **BOOKS** Why the world needs another Jimi Hendrix biog, plus Willie Nelson and more.

THIS MONTH'S CONTRIBUTORS INCLUDE...



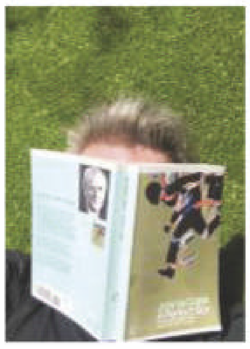
John Aizlewood

John has been writing for MOJO since 2018. Before that, he wrote for Q, Tracks, Melody Maker, Sounds and other publications no longer with us. He writes about sport too and so was delighted to talk Queens Park Rangers with Tony Hicks of The Hollies in his first major MOJO piece. Turn to page 32.



Andrew Collins

The Northampton-born art student designed pages for NME in 1988, moving diagonally via inkies and glossies, Radios 1, 2, 4, 5 and 6, Classic FM and Radio Times. Billy Bragg's Boswell, he played drums for Cud at Brixton Academy and suggests how to buy fellow East Midlander Kevin Coyne on page 100.



Danny Eccleston

MOJO's Senior Editor learned much of what he knows about music mags from the two gentlemen on the left. So blame them. In the current issue, he interviews Springsteen snapper Janet Macoska, is carried away by the new Villagers album, and gets to the bottom of Hendrix's legendary lost Joni Mitchell tape.

Barry Feinstein, Jon Berkeley

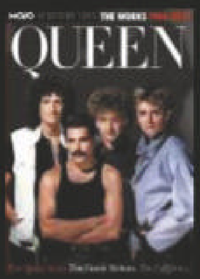
QUEEN. MOJO'S FINEST WRITERS.
THE FULL STORY. IN TWO DELUXE VOLUMES.

MOJO THE COLLECTORS' SERIES
THE WORKS 1970-1979
QUEEN
UK £7.99 US $15.99 CAN $16.99
06
The Imperial Decade. The Finest Writers. The Full Story.

AVAILABLE NOW!

Buy online at greatmagazines.co.uk/mojo-specials

Queen 1980-2021 out July 29, 2021



OH! YOU PRETTY THINGS

15 CHAMBER POP NUGGETS FROM ST. VINCENT, FATHER JOHN MISTY, JOHN GRANT & MORE

1 ST. VINCENT

Candy Darling

Annie Clark namechecked Bowie as one of her role models in MOJO 331, and if *Hunky Dory* had Andy Warhol, Clark's exceptional sixth St. Vincent album has this gem dedicated to Warhol muse Candy Darling. "[She] was just so beautiful and singular and funny," Clark told us, "and I feel kind of a perfect heroine."

Written by Annie Clark. Published by Nail Polish Manifesto Music Administered by Hipgnosis Notes (ASCAP), ℗&©2021 Loma Vista Recordings. Distributed by Concord. From *Daddy's Home* (Loma Vista Recordings); www.lomavistarecordings.com/

2 FATHER JOHN MISTY

Things It Would Have Been Helpful To Know Before The Revolution

Few recent artists have grasped the elegant simplicity of *Hunky Dory* better than Josh Tillman, AKA Father John Misty. When this song emerged on 2017's *Pure Comedy*, he said, "If you listen to *Hunky Dory* or something, the best songs on that record are piano, bass, drums and handclaps, and they sound massive."

Written by Father John Misty. ℗&©Cripple Creek Fairies (ASCAP)/Kobalt Music Publishing. From *Pure Comedy* (Bella Union).

3 JOAN AS POLICE WOMAN

Real Life

A bit of a shoo-in for this comp, as Joan Wasser has also figured in Antony And The Johnsons and Rufus Wainwright's band, as well as releasing her own very fine records as Joan As Police Woman. Real Life is the title track of her first solo album from back in 2006, a piano nocturne with the most delicate strings accompaniment.

Written by Joan Wasser. Produced and mixed by Bryan Goggin, ℗&©2006 Reveal Records under exclusive license to Play It Again Sam, Published by Fists Of Fury Music/Chrysalis Songs.

4 AIMEE MANN

Good For Me

Mann's enthusiasm for David Bowie extends to a taste for his ultimate Tin Pan Alley role model, Anthony Newley. But there are no Swinging London affectations on this subtle delight from her ninth and most recent LP, *Mental Illness*; instead, there's a reflective vibe from the opening lines, "What a waste of a smoke machine/Took the taste of the dopamine/And left me high and dry."

Written by Aimee Mann & Jonathan Coulton. ℗&©Aimee Mann & SuperEgo Records. From *Mental Illness.* 2017 Super Ego Records.

9 PLUSH

Blown Away

Chicagoan Liam Hayes has had a curious career as a kind of underground Bacharach: a cameo in the film version of High Fidelity was his highest-profile gig; his most famous album, *Fed*, was initially only released in Japan. Blown Away is a tricky, ornate highlight of that record – a masterpiece of complex easy listening from, remarkably, a sometime sideman of Royal Trux.

Written by Liam Hayes. Published by Candlewick Lake (ASCAP) ℗&©Candlewick Lake 2002. From *Fed* (After Hours/Broken Horse).

10 CARDINAL

You've Lost Me There

Not unlike Plush, Cardinal's fragile chamber pop was a cult sensation when their first LP crept out in 1994. But the duo were not built to last and went their separate ways: Eric Matthews to a solo career on Sub Pop; Richard Davies to a solo career and the revival of his original Australian band, The Moles. After years of estrangement, a second Cardinal LP, *Hymns*, emerged in 2012.

Written by Richard Davies. Published by Fire Songs ℗&©1994, Cardinal. From *Cardinal* (Flydaddy Records).

11 RUFUS WAINWRIGHT

Unfollow The Rules

2020's *Unfollow The Rules* marked a return to the singer-songwriter's trade for Wainwright, after work in the opera world had occupied him for a few years. This title track showcased undimmed piano man chops, and in a MOJO interview he paid homage to forebears Cole Porter, Randy Newman, key *Hunky Dory* influence Neil Young and Schubert.

Written by Rufus Wainwright. ℗&©2020 Rufus Wainwright, Licensed To – BMG Rights Management (US) LLC, copyright and published by Aserkh Music.

12 JOHN GRANT

The Cruise Room

A memorable ballad from John Grant's new album, *Boy From Michigan*, produced by Cate Le Bon. "I seem to be very impressed, when it comes to music, with strong females," Grant said in 2016. "But Bowie is probably the male where I thought, 'I would like to be that person'… when it came to performance and showmanship, you just couldn't get any better than David Bowie."

Written by John Grant. ℗&©BMG Rights Management (UK) ltd. From *Boy from Michigan* (Bella Union).

Lance Troxel, Kevin Westenberg, Zackery Michael, Jim Newberry, Kahimi Karie, Jiro Schneider, Giles Clement, Anna Sampson, Emma Tillman, V Tony Hauser, Getty, Shutterstock, Charles Peterson

IN THIS MONTH'S MOJO, DANA GILLESPIE TELLS US A GOOD story about David Bowie. He's hanging out with her in the Gioconda café, Denmark Street, back in 1964, an aspiring denizen of Tin Pan Alley waiting to be famous. "The reason you sat there was to get in with the music publishers, to get one of your songs placed," says Gillespie. "David always considered himself a songwriter first."

After the crunch of *The Man Who Sold The World*, and before the delirious glam of *Ziggy Stardust*, this is the persona Bowie fell back on for 1971's *Hunky Dory*. He combined Broadway shtick with edgier styles learned from Reed, Dylan and Young. Tunes were often carried along by grand piano, dusted equally with grit and glitter. It was, in a way, a transitional period: a studious immersion in songwriting craft. But as would soon become a pattern, what Bowie toyed with fleetingly could become a long-term calling for many other fine artists.

Hence *Oh! You Pretty Things*, 15 chamber pop songs of intimate grandeur from 15 diverse and imaginative songwriters. It looks as though they're here to stay…

MOJO
OH! YOU PRETTY THINGS
15 CHAMBER POP NUGGETS FROM ST. VINCENT, FATHER JOHN MISTY, JOHN GRANT & MORE

5 JIM O'ROURKE

Half Life Crisis

A restless experimental artist, producer of Wilco and Stereolab, sometime member of Sonic Youth, and much more, O'Rourke is also a classic pop artisan when the mood is on him. Thus the dazzling baroque of Half Life Crisis from his last singer-songwriter album, 2015's *Simple Songs* – check out how the strutting piano line interlocks with Ronson-esque harmony guitar.

Written by Jim O'Rourke. Published by Field Code Music (BMI) ℗&©2015 Drag City, Inc. From *Simple Songs* (Drag City Records); http://www.dragcity.com/

6 DESTROYER

Crimson Tide

Vancouver's Dan Bejar has been exploring art-pop with Destroyer for 25 years, as well as figuring in Canadian indie-rock supergroup The New Pornographers. Crimson Tide, from last year's *Have We Met*, is purely, exquisitely early Bowie: arch mannerisms, extravagant visions ("I was like the laziest river/A vulture predisposed to eating off floors"!) and a great sense of melody.

Written by Daniel Bejar. ℗&©2020 Dead Oceans. Courtesy of Dead Oceans. Published by Covertly Canadian Publishing (BMI)

7 THE DIVINE COMEDY

Don't Look Down

Deluxe orch-pop on a budget from early Neil Hannon and The Divine Comedy. The gallop of Don't Look Down, indebted to Michael Nyman and Scott Walker as much as Bowie, is from their third LP, *Promenade*. Listen for Hannon's heroically self-conscious argument with God ("All this atheistic tosh I'm spouting off"); his father was, at the time, a bishop.

Written by Neil Hannon. ℗&©Divine Comedy Records Limited. Published by Sony/ATV Music Publishing 1994 Divine Comedy Records Limited

8 RICHARD SWIFT

A Song For Milton Feher

The late Richard Swift had a stellar rep as a session man and producer, and toured with The Black Keys and The Shins. His real genius, though, shone through on rare and brilliant solo albums, revealing a master songsmith who could both honour and subvert Tin Pan Alley traditions. This track comes from 2009's *The Atlantic Ocean*; the titular Feher was a '60s relaxation guru.

Written by Richard Swift. ℗&©2008 Secretly Canadian, Courtesy of Secretly Canadian, Published by DANCECONTESTWINNER (ASCAP)

13 MARIA McKEE

Let Me Forget

Famed for her time in Lone Justice, power ballad Show Me Heaven and her career on Americana's fringes, McKee came out as queer and enjoyed a radical comeback in 2020 with *La Vita Nuova*. "While I was writing it I was listening to Bowie a lot," she said. "He'd always been my touchstone, even when I was a teenager before Lone Justice, because of how he assimilated and his theatrical influences."

Written by Maria McKee. Published by Copyright Control ℗&©2020. From *La Vita Nuova* (AFAR).

14 ANTONY AND THE JOHNSONS

Cripple And The Starfish

The first song released by Anohni (on a compilation CD in 1996), it was initially written by her for a musical play of the same name. This version is from the debut Antony And The Johnsons LP. "When I first heard Cripple And The Starfish," her collaborator Lou Reed said, "I knew I was in the presence of an angel."

Written by Anohni. ℗&©2004 Secretly Canadian. Courtesy of Secretly Canadian. Published by Rebis Music LLC (ASCAP).

15 MIKE GARSON

Life On Mars?

To close, a song from *Hunky Dory* itself, stripped back to a gorgeous piano instrumental. Rick Wakeman handled the keyboards on Bowie's original, but Mike Garson was a critical member of Bowie's inner circle from *Ziggy* live up to *Reality* and its 2003 tour.

Written by David Bowie. Published by Tintoretto Music/ Screen Gems-EMI Music Inc. OBO EMI Music Publishing, LTD and Chrysalis Music Group Inc. ℗&©2011 Reference Recordings. From *The Bowie Variations* (Reference Recordings), https://referencerecordings.com/

"MY GOD, THIS IS TOTALLY DIFFERENT. THIS COULD ACTUALLY BE HUGE."

THE MAKING OF *HUNKY DORY*, AND DAVID BOWIE.

STARTS PAGE 64

CARGO COLLECTIVE

JOSEPHINE FOSTER

BLOOD RUSHING

FIRE RECORDS LP / CD

“The album follows North American folk linage from Jean Ritchie and Hedy West through to the present, via the chugging, churning electronic (folk) rock of The Velvet Underground, all the time infused with a joyous communal warmth.” Mojo “Magnificent” **** AllMusic

GOAT

HEADSOUP

ROCKET RECORDINGS LP + 7” / CD

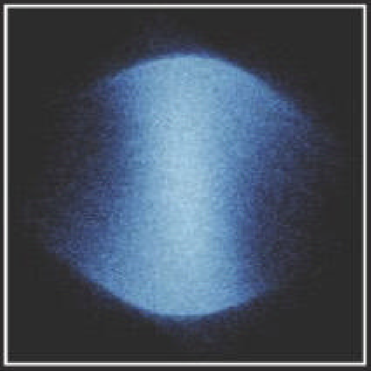
A globetrotting acid trip of an album, collecting rarities spanning GOAT’s career: standalone singles, B-sides and two enormous brand new tracks!

LINGUA IGNOTA

SINNER GET READY

SARGENT HOUSE LP / CD

Kristin Hayter, the classically trained multi-instrumentalist, performance artist, and vocalist known as Lingua Ignota returns with SINNER GET READY, the follow up 2019’s critically acclaimed break out CALIGULA.



DEAFHEAVEN

INFINITE GRANITE

SARGENT HOUSE LP / CD

Deafheaven return with their new album Infinite Granite. Produced by Justin Meldal-Johnsen (M83, Wolf Alice), Infinite Granite finds the band embarking on a new chapter of defiant beauty.

SUSANNA & DAVID WALLUMRØD

LIVE

SUSANNASONATA LP / CD

Susanna in duo with David Wallumrød on a new album featuring covers of The Beatles, Joni Mitchell and Tom Waits.

TROPICAL FUCK STORM

DEEP STATES

JOYFUL NOISE RECORDS LP / CD

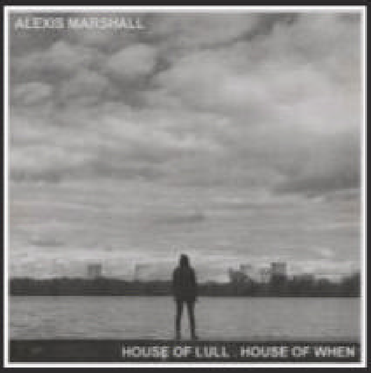
The third album from the avant-punk quad aptly titled Deep States mines familiar ground as well as new cultural terrains, while digging deeper into the subjective state of contemporary panic.

NATHAN SALSBURG

PSALMS

NO QUARTER LP / CD

New musical arrangements of Hebrew psalms by acclaimed guitarist Nathan Salsburg. Sung and played by Salsburg with support from Noa Babayof, Will Oldham, Joan Shelley, Nick Macri, Spencer Tweedy & James Elkington.

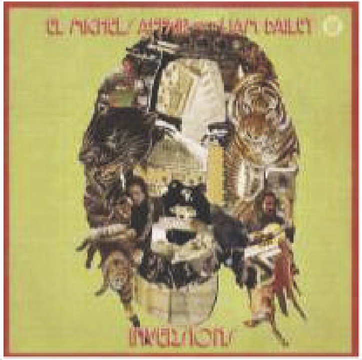


ALEXIS MARSHALL

HOUSE OF LULL . HOUSE OF WHEN

SARGENT HOUSE LP / CD

House of Lull . House of When is the solo debut from Poet, artist, and Daughters vocalist Alexis Marshall, with songs that live in the nebulous territory where abrasive rock fuses with high-art aspirations.



EL MICHELS AFFAIR MEETS LIAM BAILEY

EKUNDAYO INVERSIONS

BIG CROWN RECORDS LP / CD

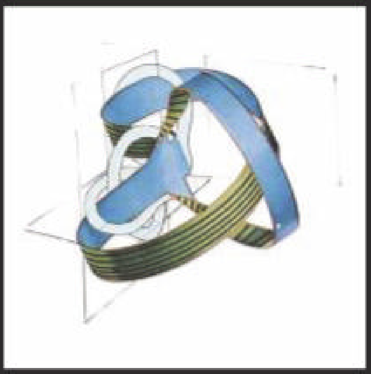
Ekundayo Inversions is El Michels Affair reimagining Liam Bailey’s Ekundayo album featuring Lee “Scratch” Perry and Black Thought of The Roots.

LANGAN, FROST & WANE

LANGAN, FROST & WANE

GOLDSTAR RECORDINGS LP / CD

New trio Langan, Frost & Wane cross folk with flower power on their upcoming new album.



TANGENTS

TIMESLIPS & CHIMERAS

TEMPORARY RESIDENCE LTD 2LP / CD

The enigmatic Australian ensemble returns with a breathtaking new double album of elated jazz, deconstructed techno, melancholy piano, throbbing ambience, and a 100-carriage coal train.

ALEX REX

PARADISE

NEOLITHIC RECORDINGS LP / CD

Paradise reunites band leader Alex Neilson with his ex-Trembling ‘Belle’ Lavinia Blackwall to produce an album that navigates the kosmische rock of Richard Youngs, the wyrd-folk of Alasdair Roberts and the psychedelic majesty of the Bells.

TORRES

THIRSTIER

MERGE RECORDS LP / CD

“Horniness on an eternal loop.”

MEGA BOG

LIFE, AND ANOTHER

PARADISE OF BACHELORS LP / CD

Mega Bog returns with fantastical off-world transmission Life, and Another, the most sophisticated, exploratory, & accessible statement yet from surrealist songwriter & avant-pop prospector Erin Birgy. Featuring co-producer James Krivchenia (Big Thief).

KING GIZZARD & THE LIZARD WIZARD

LIVE IN LONDON ‘19

(FUZZ CLUB OFFICIAL BOOTLEG)

FUZZ CLUB RECORDS 3LP BOX SET

1 of 9 King Gizzard bootleg albums from Fuzz Club, this discography-spanning, triple LP box-set captures a 2019 show at Alexandra Palace. Exclusive remaster by Brett Orrison (Jack White, The Black Angels).

WHITE FLOWERS

DAY BY DAY

TOUGH LOVE LP / CD

Day By Day is the dark-hued dreampop debut from Preston duo, White Flowers, recorded in an abandoned textile mill and produced with Doves’ Gez Williams.

AN AMALGAMATION OF RECORD SHOPS AND LABELS DEDICATED TO BRINGING YOU NEW MUSIC

IRELAND: DUBLIN - SPINDIZZY / KILKENNY - ROLLER COASTER RECORDS NORTHERN IRELAND: BANGOR - CHOONS / SABLE STARR RECORDS SCOTLAND: DUNDEE - ASSAI / EDINBURGH - ASSAI / GLASGOW - LOVE MUSIC / GLASGOW - MONORAIL / WALES: ABERYSTWYTH - ANDY’S RECORDS / BANGOR - BENDING SOUND / CAMARTHENSHIRE - TANGLED PARROT / CARDIFF - SPILLERS / NEWPORT - DIVERSE / SWANSEA - DERRICKS / SWANSEA - TANGLED PARROT NORTH- WEST: BARROW-IN-FURNESS – TNT RECORDS / LIVERPOOL - 81 RENSHAW LTD / LIVERPOOL - PROBE / MANCHESTER - PICCADILLY RECORDS / PRESTON - ACTION RECORDS NORTH-EAST: BINGLEY - FIVE RISE RECORDS / HARROGATE - P & C MUSIC / HEADINGLEY - VINYL WHISTLE / HUDDERSFIELD - VINYL TAP / LEEDS - CRASH / LEEDS - JUMBO RECORDS / NEWCASTLE - J G WINDOWS / NEWCASTLE - BEATDOWN / NEWCASTLE - BEYOND VINYL / NEWCASTLE - REFLEX / SCARBOROUGH - RECORD REVIVALS / SHEFFIELD - BEAR TREE / SHEFFIELD - RECORD COLLECTOR / SHEFFIELD - SPINNING DISCS / STOCKTON ON TEES - SOUND IT OUT / WAKEFIELD - WAH WAH RECORDS MIDLANDS: BEDFORD - SLIDE RECORDS / CAMBRIDGE - LOST IN VINYL / CAMBRIDGE - RELEVANT / COVENTRY - JUST DROPPED IN / DERBY - REVEAL RECORDS / LEAMINGTON SPA - HEAD / LEAMINGTON SPA - SEISMIC RECORDS / LEIGHTON BUZZARD - BLACK CIRCLE RECORDS / LETCHWORTH - DAVID’S MUSIC / LOUTH - OFF THE BEATEN TRACK / NOTTINGHAM - ROUGH TRADE / OXFORD - TRUCK STORE / STOKE ON TRENT - MUSIC MANIA / STOKE ON TRENT - STRAND RECORDS / WITNEY - RAPTURE SOUTH: BEXHILL ON SEA - MUSIC’S NOT DEAD / BLANDFORD FORUM - REVOLUTION ROCKS / BOURNEMOUTH - AVID RECORDS / BOURNEMOUTH - VINILO / BRIGHTON - RESIDENT / BURY ST.EDMUNDS - VINYL HUNTER / GODALMING - RECORD CORNER/ HASTINGS - CLOTH AND WAX / LEIGH-ON-SEA - FIVES / LONDON - BANQUET GRAVITY / LONDON - CASBAH / LONDON - FLASHBACK / LONDON - ROUGH TRADE EAST / LONDON - ROUGH TRADE TALBOT RD / LONDON - SISTER RAY / LUTON - VINYL REVELATIONS / NORWICH - VENUS VINYL / ROMSEY - HUNDRED / SOUTHSEA - PIE & VINYL / SOUTHEND ON SEA - SOUTH RECORDS / ST ALBANS - EMPIRE RECORDS / WATFORD - LP CAFE / WIMBORNE - SQUARE RECORDS / WHITSTABLE - GATEFIELD SOUNDS / WINCHESTER - ELEPHANT RECORDS SOUTH WEST: BRISTOL - RADIO ON / BRISTOL - ROUGH TRADE / CHELTENHAM - BADLANDS / FALMOUTH - JAM / FROME – RAVES FROM THE GRAVE / MARLBOROUGH - SOUND KNOWLEDGE / NEWTON ABBOT - PHOENIX / TOTNES - DRIFT MAILORDER AND INTERNET ONLY STORES: BLEEP.COM / BOOMKAT.COM / JUNORECORDS / MARBLE VINYL RECORDS / NORMANRECORDS.COM / PEBBLERECORDS.CO.UK / RECORDSTORE.CO.UK

17 HEATHMAN’S ROAD, LONDON SW6 4TJ - CARGORECORDS.CO.UK - INFO@CARGORECORDS.CO.UK

Jakob Dylan

WALLFLOWER, BLUE-EYED SON

What music are you currently grooving to?
Joe Henry's *The Gospel According To Water*. Joe's as good a songwriter as I'm aware of. A really moving record – he had a lot of health issues and it's a brutal look into a personal journey, and what the beyond looks like, I suppose.

What, if push comes to shove, is your all-time favourite album?
You might think I was on the payroll I speak about **The Clash** so much, but I don't think there's a better rock'n'roll record than *London Calling*. It's still *it*.

What was the first record you ever bought? And where did you buy it?
I had older brothers who'd started a pretty large record collection, and they had records I liked, **999**, **Stiff Little Fingers**, a lot of the Mod revival, **Merton Parkas**, **Lambrettas** and **Purple Hearts**. When I stepped out to get my own first record for that collection, I'm pretty sure it was **The Police**, *Ghost In The Machine*, from Tower Records on Sunset Boulevard.

Which musician, other than yourself, have you ever wanted to be?
A composite: dressed like **Paul Simonon**, singing like **Charlie Rich**, with a quarter of the talent of **Prince**.

What do you sing in the shower?
Something I'd never dare do in front of other people – **The Righteous Brothers**' Unchained Melody.

What is your favourite Saturday night record?
I don't think any band have ever sounded better on a jukebox in a shitty dive bar than **Thin Lizzy**. It'd have to be Jailbreak, The Boys Are Back In Town, Running Back – one you don't hear too often.

And your Sunday morning record?
Marianne Faithfull's *Broken English*. The Ballad Of Lucy Jordan always knocks me out of my chair.

The Wallflowers' Exit Wounds is out now on New West.

ALL BACK TO MY PLACE

THE STARS REVEAL THE SONIC DELIGHTS GUARANTEED TO GET THEM GOING...

Miki Berenyi

LUSH LIFE NO MORE

What music are you currently grooving to?
Hachiku, *I'll Probably Be Asleep*; **The Pictish Trail**, *Thumb World*; **International Teachers Of Pop**, *Pop Gossip*; **Lemondaze**, *Celestial Bodies*; **John MOuse**, *The Goat*; **Jane Weaver**, *Flock*. Nearly all of this list comprises bands who supported us on tour. And they're all great!

What, if push comes to shove, is your all-time favourite album?
You can put on anything by the **Cocteau Twins** and I'll be happy. It's a Monday, so let's say *Blue Bell Knoll*.

What was the first record you ever bought? And where did you buy it?
Until I was 13 I had to make do with the portable cassette player. So I think it was **The Teardrop Explodes**' *Wilder* and maybe simultaneously, *Kilimanjaro*. I was fully in love with **Julian Cope**. I'd been done for shoplifting from HMV on Oxford Street, so probably got them from Our Price.

Getty (2)

Which musician, other than yourself, have you ever wanted to be?
Debbie Harry, **Siouxsie Sioux**, **Brix Smith**, **Poison Ivy** – loads. All these women were in bands, playing with their partners. It seemed like the dream romance to be in a band with the person you love. Little did I know… I'm kidding!

What do you sing in the shower?
I don't. But if I did, it would likely be **Piroshka** songs because I am always needing to learn the lyrics.

What is your favourite Saturday night record?
Big, happy floorfillers – **Earth Wind And Fire**, Boogie Wonderland; **Candi Staton**, Young Hearts Run Free; **The Go-Go's**, Our Lips Are Sealed; **The Cramps**, Garbageman; **The Supremes**, You Keep Me Hangin' On; anything by **Soft Cell**. Me jumping around in our living room to any of these is not something you want to witness but it's about the only exercise I get these days.

And your Sunday morning record?
Nancy Sinatra And Lee Hazlewood, *Nancy & Lee* – the perfect antidote to a massive, bleak hangover.

Piroshka's Love Drips And Gathers is out now on Bella Union.

Phil Manzanera

ROXY MUSICIAN

What music are you currently grooving to?
My wife Claire is a massive **Joni Mitchell** fan, and whilst looking for new versions of Joni's music over lockdown, I came across an album of hers called *Both Sides, Now*. It's quite different, because it's Joni singing standards like You're My Thrill and At Last.

What, if push comes to shove, is your all-time favourite album?
I'd go for *Revolver* by **The Beatles**. I loved Tomorrow Never Knows. That led me on a new path. In fact, I did a version of that with **Brian Eno** on [experimental supergroup's 1976 album] ***801*** *Live*.

What was the first record you ever bought? And where did you buy it?
A **Shadows** EP, with Apache on it, in 1960, just before coming to London. It was in a place called Chacao in Caracas. Those were really the only records you could buy there then.

Which musician, other than yourself, have you ever wanted to be?
A composite person of **Miles Davis**, **Jimi Hendrix** and any of **The Beatles**. Then I grew up and realised you have to be yourself.

What do you sing in the shower?
Summer Holiday by **Cliff Richard** and **The Shadows**. I sing my own version, and I add "Not" before each line of every verse and every chorus. It makes me laugh and sets me up for each day.

What is your favourite Saturday night record?
Having a South American mother and being brought up in a Latin groove, it's got to be **Celia Cruz** singing La Vida Es Un Carnaval. Everything is on the up, so it's guaranteed to get everyone up and dancing.

And your Sunday morning record?
Max Richter – *Recomposed Four Seasons* by **Vivaldi**. Max Richter's like a continuation of Brian Eno, a wonderful, ambient type of classical composer. Either that or Miles Davis, *In A Silent Way*.

Tim Finn And Phil Manzanera's Caught By The Heart album is out on Expression Records on August 27.

> "I sing Summer Holiday but add 'Not' before each line."
>
> **PHIL MANZANERA**

MOJO

Academic House,
24-28 Oval Road
London NW1 7DT
Tel: 020 7437 9011
Reader queries: mojoreaders@bauermedia.co.uk
Subscriber queries: bauer@subscription.co.uk
General e-mail: mojo@bauermedia.co.uk
Website: mojo4music.com

Editor
John Mulvey
Senior Editor
Danny Eccleston
Art Editor
Mark Wagstaff
Associate Editor (Production)
Geoff Brown
Associate Editor (Reviews)
Jenny Bulley
Associate Editor (News)
Ian Harrison
Deputy Art Editor
Del Gentleman
Picture Editor
Matt Turner
Senior Associate Editor
Andrew Male
Contributing Editors
Phil Alexander, Keith Cameron, Sylvie Simmons
Storytelling Executives
James Allen, Celina Lloyd

Thanks for their help with this issue:
Keith Cameron, Ian Whent.

Among this month's contributors:
James Allen, Martin Aston, John Aizlewood, Mark Blake, Mike Barnes, Glyn Brown, John Bungey, David Buckley, Keith Cameron, Stevie Chick, Andrew Collins, Andy Cowan, Tom Doyle, Daryl Easlea, Alison Fensterstock, David Fricke, Andy Fyfe, Pat Gilbert, David Hutcheon, Chris Ingham, Jim Irvin, Colin Irwin, David Katz, Celina Lloyd, Dorian Lynskey, Andrew Male, James McNair, Andy Morris, Lucy O'Brien, Andrew Perry, Clive Prior, Jon Savage, Victoria Segal, David Sheppard, Michael Simmons, Sylvie Simmons, Ben Thompson, Kieron Tyler, Charles Waring, Lois Wilson, Stephen Worthy.

Among this month's photographers:
Cover: Brian Ward/GEMA Archive/IconicPix; (inset) Getty Richard Bellia, Henry Diltz, Karl Ferris, Janet Macoska, Jeffrey Mayer, Brandon McClain, Tom Oldham, Charles Peterson, Giuseppe Pino, Louanne Richards, Peter Sanders, Tom Sheehan, Ed Sirrs, Peter Stone, Brian Ward, Anna Webber, Kirk Weddle.

MOJO SUBSCRIPTION HOTLINE
0185 8438884
For subscription or back issue queries contact
CDS Global on **Bauer@subscription.co.uk**
To access from outside the UK
Dial: +44 (0)185 8438884

Theories, rants, etc.

MOJO welcomes correspondence for publication.
E-mail to: mojoreaders@bauermedia.co.uk

HOW DO YOU KNOW WHEN HISTORY IS being made? For Woody Woodmansey, sat in the kitchen at Haddon Hall, his initial response to Life On Mars? being composed in the room next door was, "Fucking hell that's a bit weird." Soon enough, though, Woodmansey and everyone else in David Bowie's orbit would intuit the significance of what they were hearing. "I remember speaking to people at the time," Rick Wakeman tells us, "and I said, 'It will be one of the greatest albums ever made.'"

This month's MOJO turns the spotlight on yet another epochal album celebrating its 50th anniversary in 2021: *Hunky Dory*. Tom Doyle speaks with the players, producers and even Bowie's elusive manager Tony Defries to reconstruct the album's making, and to understand the psychology of its maker – a natural pop star finally grasping the magnitude of his talent. "I'm going to be huge, and it's quite frightening in a way," Bowie told Melody Maker soon after *Hunky Dory*'s release. "Because I know that when I reach my peak and it's time for me to be brought down it will be with a bump." He mentioned, too, a new song called Five Years that was preoccupying him. The *Hunky Dory* phase, the great artistic breakthrough, was over almost as soon as it had started. But whatever happened to Bowie next, he certainly wasn't brought down with a bump.

JOHN MULVEY, EDITOR

To life! To the magnificent, dangerous, brief, brief, wonderful life…

Back from walking the dog and on the doormat was a nice shiny Amy Winehouse edition of MOJO. As is my wont, I skim through, noting articles that catch my eye, not reading any 'til later on. But then I got to the sad news about Fred Dellar. Stopped, blinked and read. Why should I feel so moved about the death of a man I didn't know? But of course, I did, through my teenage years addicted to the NME, to MOJO and the fiendish monthly crossword. He will truly be missed. I shall raise a pint to Fred.

Dave Rutter, via e-mail

…I'm very sad to read about Fred Dellar's passing, having enjoyed his writings and musings over the decades. It's very impressive (and, hopefully some comfort to his family) that such a wonderful tribute to Fred was written by John Mulvey at the beginning of MOJO 333. Then, pure class to place longer tributes on the page usually graced by the Dellar crossword. I'd always assumed Mr Dellar was a nice bloke – good to have it confirmed.

Dave Burrows, Manchester

…I was so sorry to hear of the passing of Mr Fred Dellar. I once sent him an e-mail about a mystery I was trying to solve about a U2 record I had seen years earlier. He was responsive, very cordial and the epitome of the best of MOJO. I only hope his family knows how much he meant to all of the readers. I'm sure he has a front row seat to that awesome band heaven has accumulated.

Rocky Pleasants, Richmond, Virginia

Hi baby, remember Manchester?

Although I'm not particularly an Oasis fan, I very much enjoyed your interview with Noel Gallagher [MOJO 332]. I found it refreshing, humorous and honest, Noel candidly acknowledging the records in his canon he is less proud of, as well as the ones that still fill him with pride. One thing I would challenge is his recollection of the death of John Lennon. He mentions listening to (Manchester) City on the radio and commentary interrupted to announce Lennon's death. Lennon was pronounced dead at about 11.15pm in New York on Monday, December 8, so 4.15am Tuesday in the UK. I remember hearing the news at about 7am on Tuesday as my clock radio, tuned to Radio 1, woke me for school. Manchester

City's next match wasn't until December 13, and even if they had been playing on the day in question it certainly wasn't at four in the morning. But hey, our memories play tricks on all of us sometimes.

David Mayall, Chester

You will take that back, right here in the presence of this young lady!

I have to take issue with Joni Mitchell's description of the 1970 Isle Of Wight festival as the "hate-the-performer festival" [MOJO 332]. The great majority of us came to enjoy performances by a fantastic line-up. Yes, there were disruptive elements who may have taken issue with the wealth of the top performers, and the fact they were expected to pay a measly £3 to get in, but they were a minority. The crowd responded angrily when the idiot disrupted Joni's performance, but that was because we wanted to hear her set, not because we were on the idiot's side. When he'd been removed, and Joni recovered, the crowd showed its appreciation. It might suit her to characterise this melodramatically as "the beast lay down", but there was no beast, just a large crowd who wanted to hear her performance in peace.

Melvin Schofield , via e-mail

…It was amusing to learn that Joni Mitchell was one of the hippies inhabiting the Matala caves [MOJO 332]. When I was there in '85, villagers were talking about them as some kind of scourge, unlike the "proper" tourists spending good dollars. The community was long gone, and police made regular visits to make sure they wouldn't return.

Kostas Efmorfiadis, via e-mail

Eat. Sleep. Loaf around. Flirt a little. Dance a little.

I always enjoy the free CDs with the magazine but *You Gotta Move* [MOJO 333] exceeded most albums released this year. The greatest compliment I could give is that it compares favourably with some of the excellent Kent output. This follows last month's *Hill Country Blues* compilation, another welcome addition to my collection. Carry on the great work with the magazine and keep bringing us more music to love.

Phil Sephton, St Helens

…I hope when you compile your end-of-year lists you allow a little nepotism and include your superb *You Gotta Move* under reissues or compilations.

Maurice Chittenden, via e-mail

People come. People go…

Loved the piece on Crowded House [MOJO 333]. But if I could pull up the writer on one thing it would be the absence of real mentions of Mark Hart, who was an integral part of the band, and both Peter Jones and Matt Sherrod who had the impossible task of filling Paul Hester's seat. Even though I'm no fan of Amy Winehouse, I found the 11-page tribute well written and respectful. We get the Stones, Violent Femmes and Nico too. Superb. Finally, the Hello Goodbye. Wendy Smith might have been my first crush. Great to hear her talk about the band. Though Paddy continues to produce wonderful music, I do miss the harmonising with Wendy. Her presence on *Crimson Red* would have made it even better. So, issue 333: cracking from first page to last.

Martin Carritt, Bradford

What do you do in the Grand Hotel?

Thanks for the wonderful Super Furry Animals How To Buy article [MOJO 333]. Brought back a great memory. Three years ago, we sold up and moved to Torremolinos to own a coffee bar and play music on vinyl in the Spanish sun. One day we were in Fuengirola and popped into Mercadona to buy lunch. Supermarkets all seem to play the same Balearic pop, so it took me 30 seconds to register this was not even Spanish. It was Welsh! Mawrth Oer Ar Y Blaned Neifion from *Mwng* was playing over the PA. I've always loved the album, but hadn't played it for years. Since then, my vinyl copy gets regularly played and reminds me of an amazing adventure.

G Stewart, via e-mail

I've never seen anything in my life as beautiful as you are

I read that the founding editor of MOJO, Paul Du Noyer, wanted a magazine "that had the sensibilities of a fanzine and the design values of Vogue". I regard MOJO as a publication of record more than a fanzine, providing an authoritative account of the rock era that will be a valuable reference for future cultural historians. But as for the design, Paul was right, and the magazine has maintained a consistently high standard. It's evident that real thought goes into every feature so layout, typography and photography is reflective of the artist, period or style of its subject. Your photo editor deserves commendation for sourcing original reportage and studio shots which cram the articles and get the space they deserve.

My congratulations to the art, photographic and production editors and staff. You take MOJO's high quality writing, (positively) extract the most life from it, giving readers an immersive experience that is visually stimulating, informative and always satisfying.

Stephen Holland, via e-mail

I always say that nothing should be left hanging over

A photo published in MOJO 333 was incorrectly captioned as Amy Winehouse and her manager, Nick Shymansky. It was actually a photograph of Amy with her lifelong best friend, Tyler James, who in June 2021 published his best-selling memoir My Amy: The Life We Shared (Macmillan).

Kevin Pocklington, via e-mail

SAVE MONEY ON NEWSSTAND PRICES!

AND GET MOJO DELIVERED FREE TO YOUR DOOR WHEN YOU SUBSCRIBE!

MOJO MAKES A GREAT GIFT!!!

SUBSCRIBE RIGHT NOW!

And you'll get MOJO delivered direct to your door. See page 24 for full details…

SAVE £££ OFF COVER PRICE!

Head of Magazine Media
Clare Chamberlain
MD Bauer Media Advertising
Simon Kilby
Head Of Magazine Brands
Anu Short
Brand Director Joel Stephan
Sales Operations Co-ordinator
Thomas Ward
Regional Advertising Katie Kendall
Classified Sales Executive
Max Garwood
Classified Sales Manager Ben Peck
Inserts Manager Simon Buckenham
Production Manager
Carl Lawrence
Sales Operations Executive, BMA Finance Helen Mear

President, Bauer Media Publishing
Rob Munro-Hall
EA to President Vicky Meadows
CEO of Bauer Publishing UK
Chris Duncan
Chief Financial Officer, Bauer Magazine Media Lisa Hayden
EA to CEO and CFO Stacey Thomas
Group MD Women's Mass & Celebrity, Premium and Entertainment
Helen Morris
Publisher, Premium and Entertainment
Lauren Holleyoake
PA to Group MD and Publisher
Elisha Thomas
Commercial Marketing Director
Liz Martin
Managing Editor Linda Steventon
MOJO CD and Honours Creative Director Dave Henderson
Senior Events Producer
Marguerite Peck
Senior Business Analyst
Tracey Pickering
Marketing Manager Philippa Turner
Direct Marketing Manager Julie Spires
Direct Marketing Executive
Raheema Rahim
Communications Director Jess Blake

Printing: William Gibbons
MOJO (ISSN 1351-0193; USPS 17424) is published 12 times a year by H Bauer Publishing Ltd, Media House, Peterborough Business Park, Lynch Wood, Peterborough PE2 6EA, United Kingdom. H Bauer Publishing is a company registered in England and Wales with company number LP003328, registered address Academic House, 24-28 Oval Road, London NW1 7DT. VAT no 918 5617 01.
The US annual subscription price is $114.98. Airfreight and mailing in the USA by agent named World Container Inc, 150-15, 183rd Street, Jamaica, NY 11413, USA.
Periodicals postage paid at Brooklyn, NY 11256.
US Postmaster: Send address changes to MOJO, World Container Inc, 150-15, 183rd Street, Jamaica, NY 11413, USA.
Subscription records are maintained at H Bauer, Subscriptions, CDS Global, Tower House, Sovereign Park, Lathkill Street, Market Harborough, Leicester LE16 9EF, United Kingdom.
Air Business Ltd is acting as our mailing agent.
For subscription or back issue queries, please contact CDS Global on Bauer@subscription.co.uk Phone from the UK on 01858 43 8884. Phone from overseas on +44 (0)1858 43 8884. For enquires on overseas newsstand sales e-mail Paul.Maher@seymour.co.uk

© All material published is copyright of H Bauer Publishing. No part of this magazine may be reproduced without the prior permission of the publisher. MOJO accepts no responsibility for any unsolicited material. For syndication enquiries go to: syndication@bauermedia.co.uk

H Bauer Publishing is authorised and regulated by the FCA (Ref No. 845898) and (Ref No. 710067)
To find out more about where to buy MOJO, contact Frontline Ltd, at 1st Floor, Stuart House, St Johns Street, Peterborough PE1 5DD. Tel: 01733 555161.

COMPLAINTS: H Bauer Publishing is a member of the Independent Press Standards Organisation (www.ipso.co.uk) and endeavours to respond to and resolve your concerns quickly.
Our Editorial Complaints Policy (including full details of how to contact us about editorial complaints and IPSO's contact details) can be found at www.bauermediacomplaints.co.uk. Our e mail address for editorial complaints covered by the Editorial Complaints Policy is complaints@bauermedia.co.uk.

WHAT GO N!

THE HOT NEWS AND BIZARRE S IO

Joni Mitchell
Recorded Live At
Le Hibou Mar/68
AMPEX
PROFESSIONAL RECORDING TAPE

JIMI'S JONI TAPE IN FULL

1 Night In The City
2 Come To The Sunshine
3 Chelsea Morning
4 The Pirate Of Penance
5 Conversation
6 The Way It Is
7 The Dawntreader
8 Both Sides, Now
9 Marcie
10 Nathan La Franeer
11 Dr. Junk
12 Roses Blue
13 Michael From Mountains
14 Go Tell The Drummer Man
15 I Don't Know Where I Stand
16 Sisotowbell Lane
17 Ladies Of The Canyon

Taking the town by surprise: (clockwise from left)endrix and his Concord reel-to-reel recorder in 1967; Joni on-stage in '68; archivist and Esquires drummer Richard Patterson and his mythical Ampex tape.

When Joni Met Jimi

Found in a tape hoarder's secret stash! The reel Hendrix recorded of Mitchell in Ottawa in 1968. But how did it happen?

IT'S ONE OF rock's most mysterious Lost Tapes legends: what happened to the recordings made of Joni Mitchell by Jimi Hendrix at Le Hibou Coffee House in Ottawa, Canada on March 19, 1968? It's a tantalising tale of two rising genii from different ends of the '60s music spectrum and the music they bonded over. Except the tantalising is over. After 53 years, the recordings have been recovered and will be released on volume two of Joni Mitchell's *Archives* series on October 29.

"It's very exciting," says Ottawa native and Canadian music business lifer Ian McLeish, who found the tape in the collection of his friend Richard Patterson. Another Ottawa scene fixture, Patterson had been the drummer in local band The Esquires, and had gone on to manage artists and to work in radio for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. "So, he had a lot of contacts," says McLeish. "But, he was also a magpie, obsessed with recording tape."

In 2002, McLeish was asked to help digitise Patterson's collection, items of which were released via his Mousehole Music setup. "After Richard died in 2010, his estate asked me to go through the tapes a second time," he continues. "I found another hundred or so. There was one that said right on it: 'Joni Mitchell Recorded Live At Le Hibou Mar/68'."

The fact that Hendrix – in Ottawa to play the Capitol Theatre – taped Mitchell that night is a matter of record. Eyewitnesses recall him sitting at the front of the stage and setting up his portable machine. In David Yaffe's Joni biog, Reckless Daughter, Mitchell recalled his approach: "My name is Jimi Hendrix and I was just signed to Reprise, the same label that you're on. Could I tape your show?" According to Mitchell, Hendrix spent the show watching his levels: "He engineered it all the way through. Once in a while, he'd glance up and smile and go back to this thing."

Post-show, Jimi, Joni and Experience drummer Mitch Mitchell repaired to the Motel de Ville in Vanier. Joni recalled them sitting on the floor in her room and listening to a tape of Hendrix's show, only for the hotel detective to repeatedly break up their party. "They didn't like the idea of three hippies sitting around, especially one black, alone in the room in this conservative hotel," she said.

Hendrix scribbled his groovy impressions of the evening in his diary: "Went down to little club to see Joni, fantastic girl with heaven words. We all got to party… listen to tape and smoked up at hotel." And then, from March 20: "We left Ottawa City today. I kissed Joni goodbye…." As Mitch Mitchell recalled in his memoir Jimi Hendrix: Inside The Experience, the tape recorder and tapes were stolen the next day – "end of story on that".

McLeish has no idea how Patterson obtained the tape. In his latter years his friend suffered from dementia, and always kept his collection close. "He was a character," says McLeish. "It doesn't surprise me that somebody might have passed the tape on to him and said, 'Hang onto this.' Or, it could have come into his possession after, as he went through other people's tape libraries."

What is certain from the recordings – now buffed by mastering maestro Bernie Grundman – is that Mitchell was on form that night, in terms of music and banter, and Hendrix no slouch as an engineer. Mitchell's *Song To A Seagull* debut would be released in days but she was already playing songs from 1969's *Clouds* and 1970's *Ladies Of The Canyon* – and one, The Way It Is, destined not to appear officially until now. Three Hendrix tape tracks – Chelsea Morning, Roses Blue and Both Sides, Now – don't make it to the box.

Beyond Rhino's release, the feedback McLeish has had from the Mitchell camp has been gratifying.

"I sent the tape to Joni's manager in April, who sent it to her," he says, "and she absolutely fell over. She couldn't believe it. She loves it. She's so glad that it was found."

Danny Eccleston

Joni Mitchell's Archives Volume 2 – The Reprise Years 1968-1971 is released by Rhino on October 29.

> **"Joni absolutely fell over. She couldn't believe it."**
> **IAN MCLEISH**

Photoshot/TopFoto, Getty, courtesy Ian McLeish

Spain-ted from memory (clockwise from main): Costello reprises *This Year's Model*'s cover; new sleeve art; (from left) singer Gian Marco, producer Sebastian Krys, voice Nicole Zignago, EC.

ELVIS COSTELLO REIMAGINES THIS YEAR'S MODEL – IN SPANISH!

"IT SOUNDS crazy," Elvis Costello told MOJO last year. While working with producer Sebastian Krys on the box set of 1979's *Armed Forces*, he said, they were preparing "a much more extreme revisiting" of 1978's *This Year's Model*. It was, Costello confided, "a complete re-recording of the original with my voice removed."

In his place, artists from Latin America and Spain including Chilean-American hitmaker Francisca Valenzuela, Uruguayan Oscar-winner Jorge Drexler and ex-Menudo voice Draco Rosa sing the album in Spanish. True to his word that he'd tell us more, here's Elvis on Zoom, in a hoodie and shades, his Argentine-born producer in the frame beside him.

When Costello first suggested a Spanish remake, Krys says, "I just kind of went quiet. Then I thought, this is in line with what I've seen you do in the past: out-of-the-box records," such as March's Francophone EP with Iggy Pop, or a duet in Italian with Andalusian singer Vega – whose version of Running Out Of Angels is one of *Spanish Model*'s highlights.

Non-Spanish-speaker Costello had three requirements for the album: he didn't want a big-name cast; each singer would translate their choice of song; and the Attractions' original backing tracks would be used. "There is not a note of new instrumental music on it," Costello says, meaning he's kind of made a new record with Attractions bassist Bruce Thomas, who he last worked with in 1996. Why?

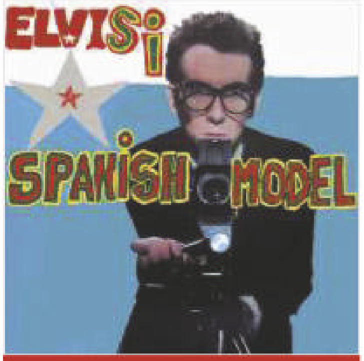
"We weren't looking to do one of those remix records where it's like, add a bunch of fashionable dance production moves. What really needs to be said is how great the band is. Take my voice out of it and the playing from Pete [Thomas], Bruce [Thomas] and Steve [Nieve] is just sensational. They could have played every single band from 1977 and 1978 right off the stage and into next week," he bristles. "Listen. Find me three other people that can play like that today, never mind then. You can't. And at that time we didn't know enough to fuck it up."

The Attractions have all heard the Spanish re-rub, as have original producer and engineer Nick Lowe and Roger Béchirian. Their responses, Costello says, range from "intrigued" to "very, very positive", and will be made public at some point. There are 16 songs in all, fusing the different versions released in the UK and US, plus Big Tears, a track Costello had always wanted included, with "a rhythm guitar duel between me and Mick Jones with Pete powering the drum."

Several of the Spanish singers are women. "I thought it was a really great opportunity to turn the songs on their head," says Elvis. The predominantly male rock critics of the time, he adds, "saw a lot of hatred of women in these songs that weren't there, frankly. Read me the words of This Year's Girl and tell me where it expresses hatred. It doesn't! It expresses dismay at the ideas that the girl in the song has to subscribe to. If you want to hear a song that's actually pretty indefensible, it's The Rolling Stones' Stupid Girl. Read the lyric of that one and tell me which one is the misogynist, me or Mick! This Year's Girl is unashamedly modelled on Stupid Girl but I wanted to flip it. And now," he smiles, "we flip it again with [Chilean voice] Cami singing it and the band churning away as they ever were."

Sylvie Simmons

Spanish Model is released on Universal Music Latino on September 10.



"There is not a note of new instrumental music on it."
ELVIS COSTELLO

GIMME FIVE... FOOTWEAR ANTHEMS

Nancy Sinatra
Boots
(REPRISE, 1966)

The album bearing Lee Hazlewood's anthem of nemesis, These Boots Are Made For Walkin'. For more musical boots, see Patrick Macnee and Honor Blackman's Kinky Boots, The Nips' Venus In Bovver Boots and, most intriguingly, Kid Congo's Dracula Boots.

Run-DMC
My Adidas
(PROFILE, 1986)

A classic of the sneaker rap genre: "I like to sport 'em, that's why I bought 'em." Word. See also Schoolly D's Put Your Fila's On, Worthy D's Nikes On My Feet and Reg E Gaines' hard-hitting Please Don't Take My Air Jordans.

Carl Perkins
Blue Suede Shoes
(SUN, 1956)

Zero hour for rock'n'roll footwear. For rocking outlaws, see also Leiber & Stoller's oft-covered greaser death disc Black Denim Trousers And Motorcycle Boots; for woe untold in the youth club of despair, try Bernard Cribbins' Winkle Picker Shoes.

Little John
Clarks Booty
(JAMMY'S, 1985)

A clacking riddim all about how the smart reggae mover needs their Clarks desert boots. And don't forget Trinity's Clarks Booty Skank, Scorcher's Put On Me Clarks and Jahvallani's Clarks Pon Foot (see Greensleeves' 2015 comp *Clarks In Jamaica* for more).

Stevie Wonder
High Heel Sneakers
(TAMLA MOTOWN, 1965)

Stevie hits the town and covers Tommy Tucker's blues hit. In the R&B footwear stakes, see also The Bar-Kays' House Shoes and Major Lance's Ain't No Soul (In These Old Shoes), or dispense with shoes altogether with Robert Parker's Barefootin'.

Paul Moore

KILIMANJARO PRESENTS

KILLING JOKE
HONOUR THE FIRE
UK TOUR 2022

MARCH 2022
28 CARDIFF TRAMSHED
29 NOTTINGHAM ROCK CITY
31 BRISTOL O_2 ACADEMY
APRIL 2022
01 LIVERPOOL O_2 ACADEMY
02 BIRMINGHAM O_2 INSTITUTE
04 MANCHESTER ALBERT HALL
05 NEWCASTLE BOILER SHOP
06 GLASGOW BARROWLAND
08 LEEDS O_2 ACADEMY
09 LONDON EVENTIM APOLLO HAMMERSMITH

MYTICKET.CO.UK KILLINGJOKE.CO.UK

AN ACTION! PRESENTATION BY ARRANGEMENT WITH UNITED TALENT AGENCY

THE SISTERS OF MERCY

10 & 11 & 12 SEPTEMBER 2021
LONDON
CAMDEN ROUNDHOUSE

MYTICKET.CO.UK
THESISTERSOFMERCY.COM

KILIMANJARO AN ACTION! PRESENTATION BY ARRANGEMENT WITH PRIMARY TALENT INTERNATIONAL

marillion
the light at the end
of the tunnel tour

NOVEMBER 2021
SUN 14 HULL CITY HALL
MON 15 EDINBURGH USHER HALL
WED 17 CARDIFF ST DAVID'S HALL
THU 18 MANCHESTER BRIDGEWATER HALL
SAT 20 CAMBR SOLD OUT N EXCHANGE
SUN 21 BIRMINGHAM SYMPHONY HALL
TUE 23 LIVERPOOL PHILHARMONIC
WED 24 BATH FORUM
FRI 26 LONDON EVENTIM APOLLO HAMMERSMITH
SAT 27 LONDON EVENTIM APOLLO HAMMERSMITH

MYTICKET.CO.UK | MARILLION.COM

A KILIMANJARO & KNOWMOREPROMOTIONS PRESENTATION

MADELEINE PEYROUX
CARELESS LOVE FOREVER
WORLD TOUR

NOVEMBER 2021
09 EDINBURGH USHER HALL
10 GATESHEAD THE SAGE
11 BIRMINGHAM TOWN HALL
13 BEXHILL DE LA WARR PAVILION
14 CAMBRDIGE CORN EXCHANGE
16 LONDON PALLADIUM
18 BATH THE FORUM
19 MANCHESTER BRIDGEWATER HALL

MYTICKET.CO.UK
MADELEINEPEYROUX.COM
DELUXE ALBUM AVAILABLE FALL 2021

A KILIMANJARO PRESENTATION

TICKETS AVAILABLE AT myticket.co.uk

Cobain storm! (clockwise from main) Gaz turns it up to 11; possible drummer Noel Gallagher; Paul Weller gets subcontinental.

THE AMORPHOUS ANDROGYNOUS RETURN! WITH "SONIC WANGERY", WELLER AND MORE

"I'VE GOT A château in France," says Garry Cobain, the cosmic yet matter-of-fact brain behind The Amorphous Androgynous. "But don't be impressed by it. I bought it with very much a Led Zep romanticism in my mind, but it's falling apart in my absence – it's a fucking nightmare, ha ha! So don't follow my lead!"

It would be near-impossible to try. Alongside partner Brian Dougans, Cobain's been a chimerical presence in music since 1991's starry-eyed rave classic Papua New Guinea, credited to The Future Sound Of London. A later refocusing as The Amorphous Androgynous led to 2002's unashamedly Aquarian *The Isness* and "super-consciousness" mixtape series *A Monstrous Psychedelic Bubble Exploding In Your Mind*. Yet an uncompleted album with Noel Gallagher begun in 2009, it seems, placed stones in his passway that took time to get over.

"In simplistic terms we haven't actually done anything since 2002," says Gaz. "But we've been very busy, and all those chapters have been collected and worked through."

Already released is big-themes prog-epic *We Persuade Ourselves We Are Immortal*, a six-part, 40-minute suite with strings and analogue synths featuring Peter Hammill, Paul Weller and the Chesterfield Philharmonic Choir, among others. The piece had a long genesis, growing from, variously, childhood memories of Pink Floyd, the Iraq War, hearing Comfortably Numb while immobilised on a Shoreditch acupuncturist's couch, meeting Hammill at the MOJO Honours List awards in 2010, and the tragic death of drummer Virgil Howe.

"I began to realise, my God, you've got one life," says Cobain. "I regrouped, regrew and regathered. I wanted to get into my own power again… the challenge [with *We Persuade…*] was to make it not only new, but also '70s, which I realise is a bracket that potentially only 'me' would like."

He says that recording has been going on since 2011, collaborating with musicians at 12 studios, physically and remotely – spaces include previous collaborator Weller's Black Barn, ex-Verve guitarist Nick McCabe's West Midlands set-up and, for mixing, Enrico Berto's Neve desk-equipped Mushroom studio near Venice. As a self-funded project, Cobain was able to overcome budgetary restrictions in a spirit of cooperation, directing up-for-it musicians including McCabe, guitarist Ray Fenwick, The Kooks' Luke Pritchard, and Steve Cradock into new creation via his sample collages and vibes.

"I'm tapping into all these great people and their collective knowledge," he says. "The album goes from pagan folk craziness to rocktronica to sampledelia to prog-funk epics. The next single [Mantra (Crossing Over)] is pure Madchester, a confluence of where machine hits spirituality hits vocal – I've got Paul [Weller] on vocals, guitar, keyboards and veena, and Rowetta! …there's a lot of sonic wangery on the album, the songs point to inherent spiritual sound-truths…"

Cobain is currently in Glastonbury for a month, and as Dougans lives in Frome, they might get to meet in the flesh. We must ask: will the Noel Gallagher LP ever come out?

"I felt quite stung by the Noel situation," says Cobain, who says he has 10 hard drives' worth of music from the 18-month sessions. "We didn't finish it together. I'd love a reason to revisit it, it was great, but maybe it was a bit too early… on a finishing note, [Noel] may or may not be on the album. I've had so many drummers and bassists in that I've forgotten."

Ian Harrison

> "I felt quite stung by the Noel situation."
>
> GARRY COBAIN

FACT SHEET

Title: *Listening Beyond The Head Chakra*

Due: winter 2021

Songs: The Machines Of Loving Grace / Give A Little Bit Of Money / We Persuade Ourselves We Are Immortal

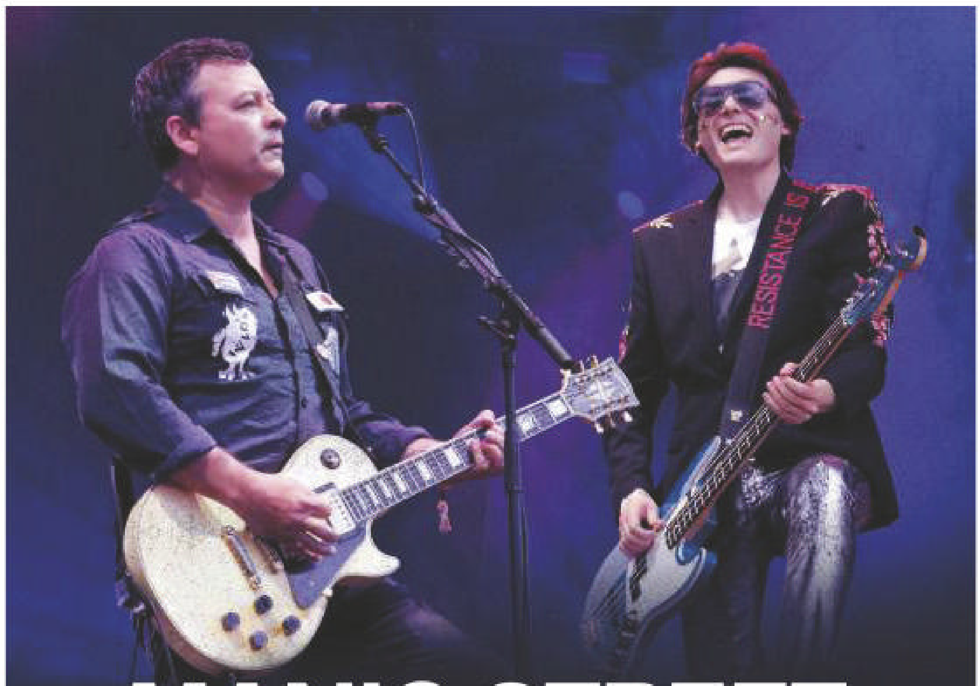
The Buzz: "I'm not making some by-numbers piece of shit here, this is not some psychedelic copying exercise. This is a very new concept that's encapsulating a new revolutionary truth for now… I don't wanna compromise any more and this is my glorious opportunity to not compromise at all." *Garry Cobain*

ALSO WORKING

…**Robert Smith** (right) told The Sunday Times that the new **CURE** LP amounts to "10 years of life distilled into a couple of hours of intense stuff… I can't think we'll ever do anything else" …**PUBLIC SERVICE BROADCASTING** release their new LP *Bright Magic* in September: an impressionistic portrait of Euro-metropolis Berlin, mainman **J. Willgoose, Esq.** says, "The whole shape and structure of the record is very much in debt to [**David Bowie**'s] *Low*" … **ROGER TAYLOR**'s *Outsider* arrives in October. Locked down with studio time, he "suddenly found myself with an album… [the songs] came out one after the other" …**BRIAN ENO** promises new material on The Lighthouse, his new Sonos Radio channel …after deleting the digital files, composer **ERLAND COOPER** buried the ¼-inch magnetic tapes of new LP *Carve The Runes Then Be Content With Silence* – a string piece in honour of Orcadian poet George Mackay Brown – somewhere in the Orkneys. It'll be exhumed and released in 2024: "The material on the tape may erode naturally… or the peaty soil may preserve it perfectly well," ponders Cooper …ex-**Felt** and **Denim** man **LAWRENCE** is preparing new LP *Poundland And The Possibilities Of Modern Shopping*. A lead track, Record Store Day, was out for the second RSD drop, by **Mozart Estate** rather than the more familiar **Go-Kart Mozart**. "A better name for different times," says Lawrence …**DIANA ROSS** (left) has *Thank You* due in autumn. Collaborators include **Jack Antonoff** and **Mark 'Spike' Stent**…

Getty (2)

S.J.M. CONCERTS PRESENTS



MANIC STREET PREACHERS

LIVE 2021

PERFORMING SONGS FROM THE ULTRA VIVID LAMENT & ALL THEIR CLASSICS

PLUS THE ANCORES (EXCEPT LONDON)

SUN 26 SEP
NEWCASTLE O$_2$ CITY HALL

TUE 28 SEP
EDINBURGH USHER HALL

WED 29 SEP
DUNDEE CAIRD HALL

SOLD OUT
STOKE VICTORIA HALL

SAT 02 OCT
MANCHESTER O$_2$ APOLLO

MON 04 OCT
YORK BARBICAN

TUE 05 OCT
GLASGOW BARROWLAND

THU 07 OCT
LEEDS O$_2$ ACADEMY

FRI 08 OCT
PORTSMOUTH GUILDHALL

SUN 10 OCT
BOURNEMOUTH O$_2$ ACADEMY

SOLD OUT
CAMBRIDGE CORN EXCHANGE

SOLD OUT
BATH FORUM

SOLD OUT
BRIGHTON DOME

FRI 03 DEC
LONDON THE SSE ARENA, WEMBLEY
PLUS SPECIAL GUESTS TBA

GIGSANDTOURS.COM TICKETMASTER.CO.UK MANICSTREETPREACHERS.COM

NEW ALBUM **'THE ULTRA VIVID LAMENT'** RELEASED FRI 03 SEPT

PRESENTED BY SJM CONCERTS & DF CONCERTS BY ARRANGEMENT WITH X-RAY

Richard Ashcroft

AN ACOUSTIC EVENING OF HIS CLASSIC SONGS

2021
SOLD OUT 16 & S SOLD OUT 17 Oct
LONDON Palladium

EXTRA DATES ADDED

Fri 29 Oct
LIVERPOOL
M&S Bank Arena
MANDSBANKARENA.COM

SOLD OUT 01 Nov
LONDON
Royal Albert Hall

GIGSANDTOURS.COM TICKETMASTER.CO.UK
RICHARDASHCROFT.COM

AN SJM CONCERTS PRESENTATION BY ARRANGEMENT WITH ITB

THE CHARLATANS

PLUS SPECIAL GUESTS

MARTIN CARR
& WHAT FUTURE
(EXC 22 & 23 NOV)
+
AOIFE NESSA FRANCES
(22 & 23 NOV ONLY)
+
DJ SET FROM
THE GO! TEAM
(10 DEC ONLY)

A HEAD FULL OF IDEAS
~~30TH~~ 31st ANNIVERSARY BEST OF TOUR

NOVEMBER
MON 22 BELFAST LIMELIGHT
TUE 23 DUBLIN OLYMPIA
THU 25 WREXHAM WILLIAM ASTON HALL
SOLD OUT BRISTOL O$_2$ ACADEMY
SAT 27 BIRMINGHAM O$_2$ ACADEMY
MON 29 BEXHILL DE LA WARR PAVILION
TUE 30 BOURNEMOUTH O$_2$ ACADEMY
DECEMBER
SOLD OUT OXFORD O$_2$ ACADEMY
SOLD OUT CAMBRIDGE CORN EXCHANGE
SOLD OUT MANCHESTER O$_2$ VICTORIA WAREHOUSE
MON 06 LINCOLN ENGINE SHED
WED 08 LIVERPOOL INVISIBLE WIND FACTORY
THU 09 NEWCASTLE O$_2$ CITY HALL
FRI 10 LONDON O$_2$ ACADEMY BRIXTON
SUN 12 NORWICH UEA EXTRA DATE ADDED
TUE 14 EXETER GREAT HALL EXTRA DATE ADDED
THU 16 NOTTINGHAM ROCK CITY
FRI 17 LEEDS O$_2$ ACADEMY
SOLD OUT GLASGOW O$_2$ ACADEMY
SOLD OUT ABERDEEN MUSIC HALL

GIGSANDTOURS.COM TICKETMASTER.CO.UK THECHARLATANS.NET
AN SJM CONCERTS PRESENTATION BY ARRANGEMENT WITH X-RAY

A HEAD FULL OF IDEAS BOX SET OUT OCT 15TH

---

suede

plus special guest **NADINE SHAH**

PERFORMING THE CLASSIC ALBUM IN FULL

NOVEMBER 2021
Wed 03 EDINBURGH USHER HALL
Fri 05 NOTTINGHAM ROCK CITY
Sat 06 BIRMINGHAM 02 ACADEMY
Sun 07 BRISTOL 02 ACADEMY
Tue 09 LEEDS 02 ACADEMY
SOLD OUT MANCHESTER 02 VICTORIA WAREHOUSE
Thu 11 LONDON ALEXANDRA PALACE

GIGSANDTOURS.COM | TICKETMASTER.CO.UK
suede.co.uk

PRESENTED BY SJM CONCERTS AND DF BY ARRANGEMENT WITH 13 ARTISTS

GIGSANDTOURS.COM TOUR ANNOUNCEMENTS & PRIORITY BOOKING FIND US ON GIGSANDTOURS.COM

Only when he left: Gary Kemp; (below) Nick Mason's Saucerful Of Secrets (from left) Guy Pratt, Mason, Kemp.

GARY KEMP

Spandau Ballet's hitman talks crises, Pink Floyd and going solo.

Malcolm Venville

GARY KEMP should have spent the last few months touring with Nick Mason's Saucerful Of Secrets, singing and playing guitar on early-period Pink Floyd songs. Instead, he's been preparing *Insolo*, his first solo album since 1995. Its sophisto-rock vignettes reflect on solitude and past selves and, he intimates, draws a line under Spandau Ballet, whose story involved huge '80s pop success with 1983's True, a bruising High Court royalties battle in 1999 and an against-the-odds reformation in 2009. "I'm a great dabbler," he says from home in London, "and I love a pompous rock statement."

New song Waiting For The Band recalls seeing Bowie at Hammersmith in 1973.

I got to see him at the Marquee club in 1973, as well, when I had this moment, where I pass the bangle off on my wrist up to him on stage and he looks at me in the eyes and says, "Thank you," and the entire universe vanishes apart from me and him. I still think that's the greatest moment I've ever experienced in my life in music.

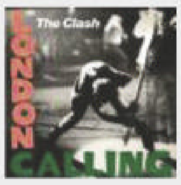
More exciting than being a massive pop star with Spandau Ballet?

I probably didn't enjoy much of the '80s, when it was really happening for us, because I was just always worrying about what the next step would be and thinking, "Christ, I better write another record." When you're on-stage you never get goosebumps, you're just thinking technically. "I've got to play this next, are those lights working?" It was certainly like that for me, because I'm the biggest worrier ever. I can foresee the crisis at any minute.

After aa few years, crisis did come to Spandau Ballet.

There grew quite a lot of friction within the band. As we developed, I found it harder and harder to work within those parameters… people have this impression, "You were all mates, how come [the split] happened?", but to be honest [Spandau Ballet] were not ever all mates. Tony [Hadley] was the singer because he was the only bloke we knew with a leather jacket. People get angry with me, regular fans, because I'm not putting the band back together, and what they're really angry about is I can't make them 15 again, I can't put them back to that moment when it was all wonderful and their future was ahead. I think bands can suffer from that as well.

> "I love a pompous rock statement."
> **GARY KEMP**



KEMP MEETIN'

Gary's songs for London.

1 **Ian Hunter** *A Nightingale Sang In Berkeley Square* (MERCURY, 2003)
2 **The Clash** *London Calling* (CBS, 1979)
3 **David Bowie** *The London Boys* (DERAM, 1966)
4 **Noel Coward** *London Pride* (HMV, 1941)
5 **The Kinks** *Waterloo Sunset* (PYE, 1967)

Some people were surprised when you joined Nick Mason's Saucerful Of Secrets.

Nick said he put a band together of people that he would be happy having dinner with. I've known Nick for a long time, I've been buying Pink Floyd records since I was 13… I think I understood Syd Barrett, because Syd to me was that London voice of whimsy. If it wasn't for Syd, there would have been no Ziggy, no Johnny Rotten. And Nick said right from the beginning, "We're not a tribute act, let's do it our way." So that allowed me to be my own guitar player in the situation – that period we operate in is before the purple guitar solos.

How was it when Roger Waters joined you for Set The Controls For The Heart Of The Sun in New York in 2019?

It was extraordinary. The very first time I ever jammed with other musicians was when I was about 12, we were down at a friend's basement, and we played Set The Controls For The Heart Of The Sun all day. And to sort of go full circle, and actually end up on-stage with Roger and Nick playing that song, that did make me smile. The first time I ever met Roger was on-stage, so that was even more scary. He's quite a formidable person, so I was glad to see that he liked our version.

Can you empathise with Nick re: the Waters/Gilmour situation?

I can't even get involved with that. I'm with Nick, the geezer in the middle. Me and Tony had our problems, and I think we've learned to stop bothering each other, and I think that's made our relationship better than ever.

You were saying until quite recently that you'd like to reform Spandau.

I don't think I want that now. I did [*Onsolo*] all while I was away with Nick on tour and, for the first time in my life, I was liberated as a guitar player and as a singer. I think that really inspired me to make a record for myself. So I think I've really severed that part of my life, and I'm already halfway through making another record. I just think I'd rather voice my own songs now.

Tell us something that you've never told an interviewer before.

I really hate shaking hands… a sweaty palm against a sweaty palm (*shudders*). I particularly hate blokes who think they have got to really squeeze your hand hard. [Not shaking hands] is the only good thing that the pandemic has given me. I would rather hug to be honest.

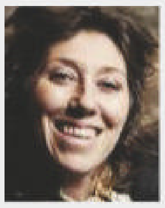
Ian Harrison

Insolo is out now on Columbia.

LAST NIGHT A RECORD CHANGED MY LIFE

Martha Wainwright

The songwriting scion hails **Leonard Cohen**'s *I'm Your Man* (Columbia, 1988)

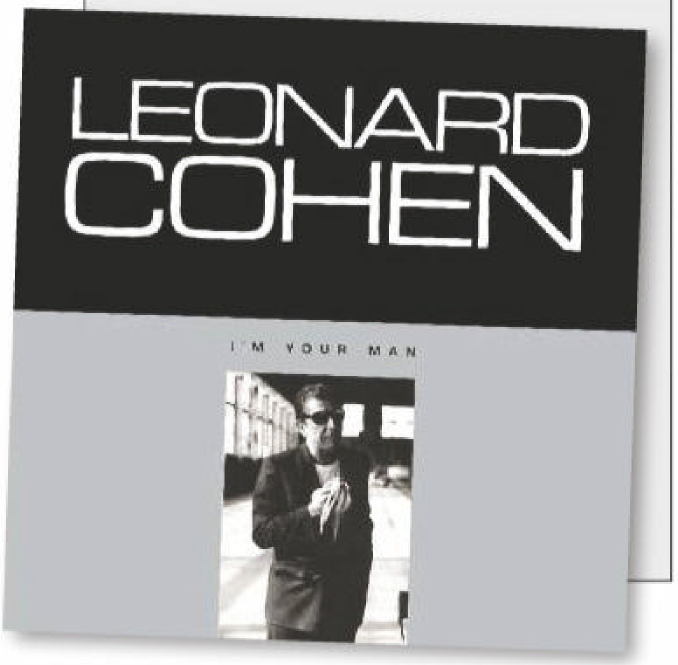


I was 12 when I found the record somewhere in my house in Montreal, on cassette. I hadn't heard his other songs, and I felt like I had really fallen on the most incredible thing. The album was absolutely captivating. The songs were not pop songs and the lyrics were so vivid and descriptive. Nothing about his music was too overt. The sexuality of it is beautiful, soft and not intimidating, the politics of it were not hurtful or angry. It was a view into the complexity of adult life. I remember my mum took me to see Leonard Cohen at the Théâtre Saint-Denis in Montreal, and she said, "He grew up in Westmount," which is where I grew up. I was certainly one of the youngest people there, but I was completely bowled over. From that moment, my dream was to become his back-up singer. Of course, my own songwriting was influenced by this album. My biggest influences before were my parents [Loudon Wainwright III and Kate McGarrigle], their songwriting wasn't quite as poetic or image driven as Leonard and he became very much a musical father to me.

I actually knew Leonard at that time, because I was friends with his daughter, Lorca. Very early on, I went with Lorca to Hydra and learnt Tower Of Song in his house. I would stay with them in LA, and he came to see me play. He would listen to my songs and give me advice. He was very helpful, kind and generous. Years later, I was with Lorca, and he was auditioning people to be his back-up singers. I knew all the songs and Lorca said, "You should go, my dad will hire you." By this point, I was starting my own career. I thought, "I don't wanna be Leonard Cohen's back-up singer any more. I wanna be Leonard Cohen."

As told to Celina Lloyd

Love Will Be Reborn is out on August 20 on Pheromone/Cooking Vinyl.



BRITISH JAZZ EXPLOSION RESTORES LOST TREASURES OF THE '60s AND '70s!

"MY DAD was a jazz musician before me," remembers 79-year-old British saxophone colossus Alan Skidmore, from his home in Borehamwood, "and he blamed The Beatles for the end of jazz, but of course that wasn't true."

Skidmore *fils* could back up his more optimistic stance with receipts for payments from the Fab Four for session work at Abbey Road, and adds, "I can't remember which song it was, but John Lennon didn't like the feeling in the studio so he got the crew to fill it with flowers." He was lucky enough to be one of a golden generation of British jazz players – operating between the trad and modern jazz booms of the late '50s and early '60s, and the wilderness years of the mid-'70s onwards (when you had to go to Europe if you wanted to make a living) – who fused Swinging London's musical hubbub into a legacy as rich and rewarding as any The Beatles left behind.

It's this dizzyingly fluid period of creative cross-fertilisation that's captured with ecstatic clarity on new compilation *Journeys In Modern Jazz: Britain (1965-72)*. Opening the British Jazz Explosion reissue series, it heralds an exciting sequence of deluxe remastered editions of often prohibitively rare LPs from the Decca, Lansdowne, Deram, Argo, and Fontana catalogues (good luck getting originals of the two Mike Taylor albums for less than a grand each).

Compiler Tony Higgins' inspired selection started life more than 10 years ago but then the tide of record company interest receded a little – as has happened all too regularly over the decades – giving him the time needed to expand it into its current lustrous double-CD/double-LP form.

It reveals the brief but magical period when visionary facilitators such as Denis Preston and Peter Eden created a climate where the cadre of eclectic virtuosi operating on the London jazz scene of the time could make albums which captured the full extent of their talents. "I learnt as much from Alan Skidmore as I did from Sonny Rollins," says Skidmore's fellow Mike Westbrook Concert Band and Mike Gibbs veteran John Surman from home in Norway, "because I was standing next to him on the stage and I could feel what he's doing."

For his part, Skidmore remembers other unique moments of the era, like waiting in the cold outside Pye Studios in Marble Arch with Jimmy Page and Brian Auger at 10 in the morning in 1968, while Sonny Boy Williamson downed the bottle of whiskey he needed to get himself going. He also recalls working with the BBC radio orchestra in the day, playing the Talk Of The Town in the evening and jamming at Ronnie Scott's Old Place in Gerrard St after-hours. "It all added up to the end product," Skidmore remembers, "which was to be a soloist."

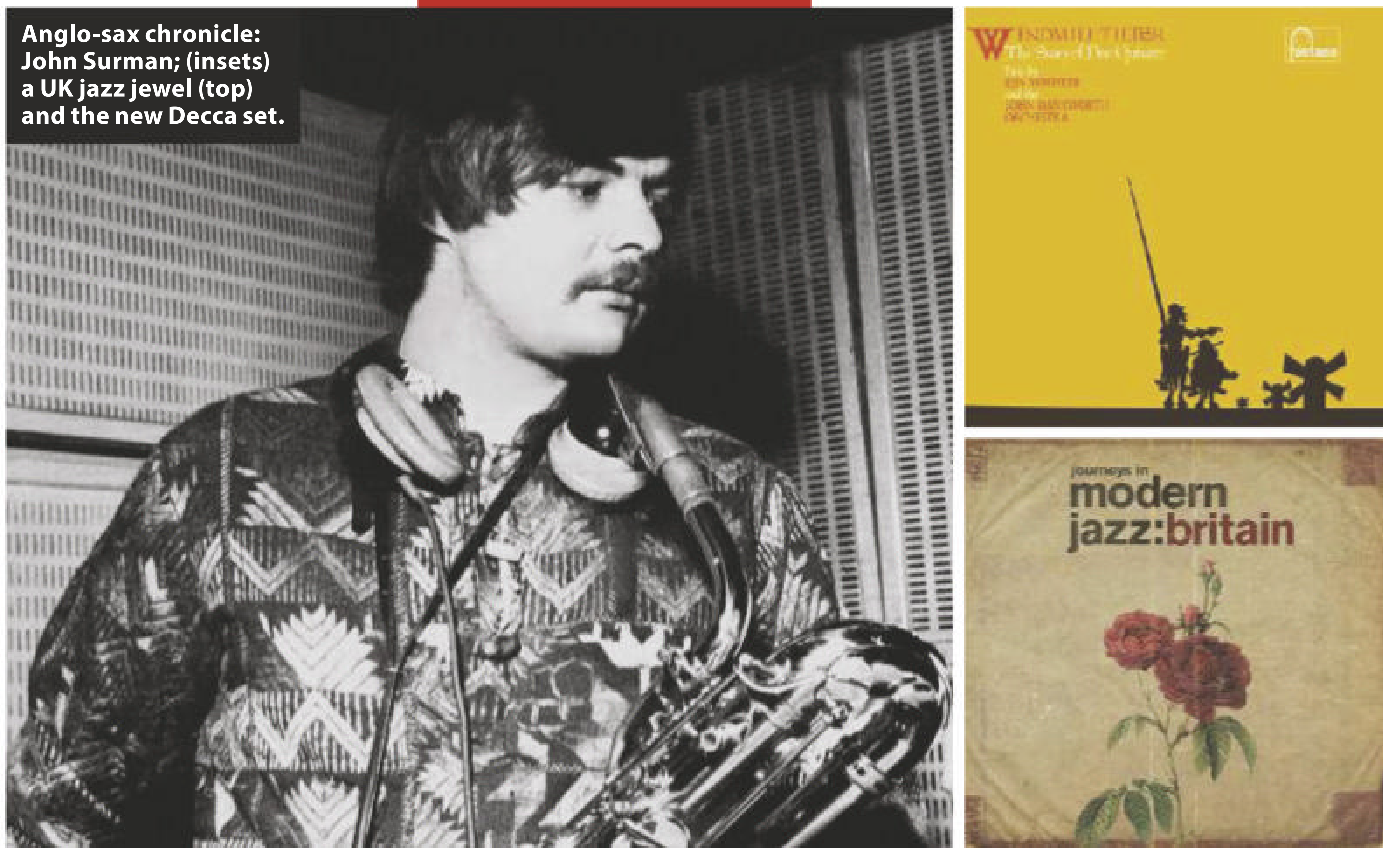
With a new wave of British jazz talent ready to big up the contributions of illustrious but often under-appreciated forebears, the timing of this release is auspicious. "Recordings by people like Michael Garrick, Mike Westbrook and John Surman are what really inspired me", Sons Of Kemet powerhouse Shabaka Hutchings has insisted. Hearing this beautiful music being given the prominence it deserves at last, it's like the Noah's Ark of British jazz came back from the flood.

Ben Thompson

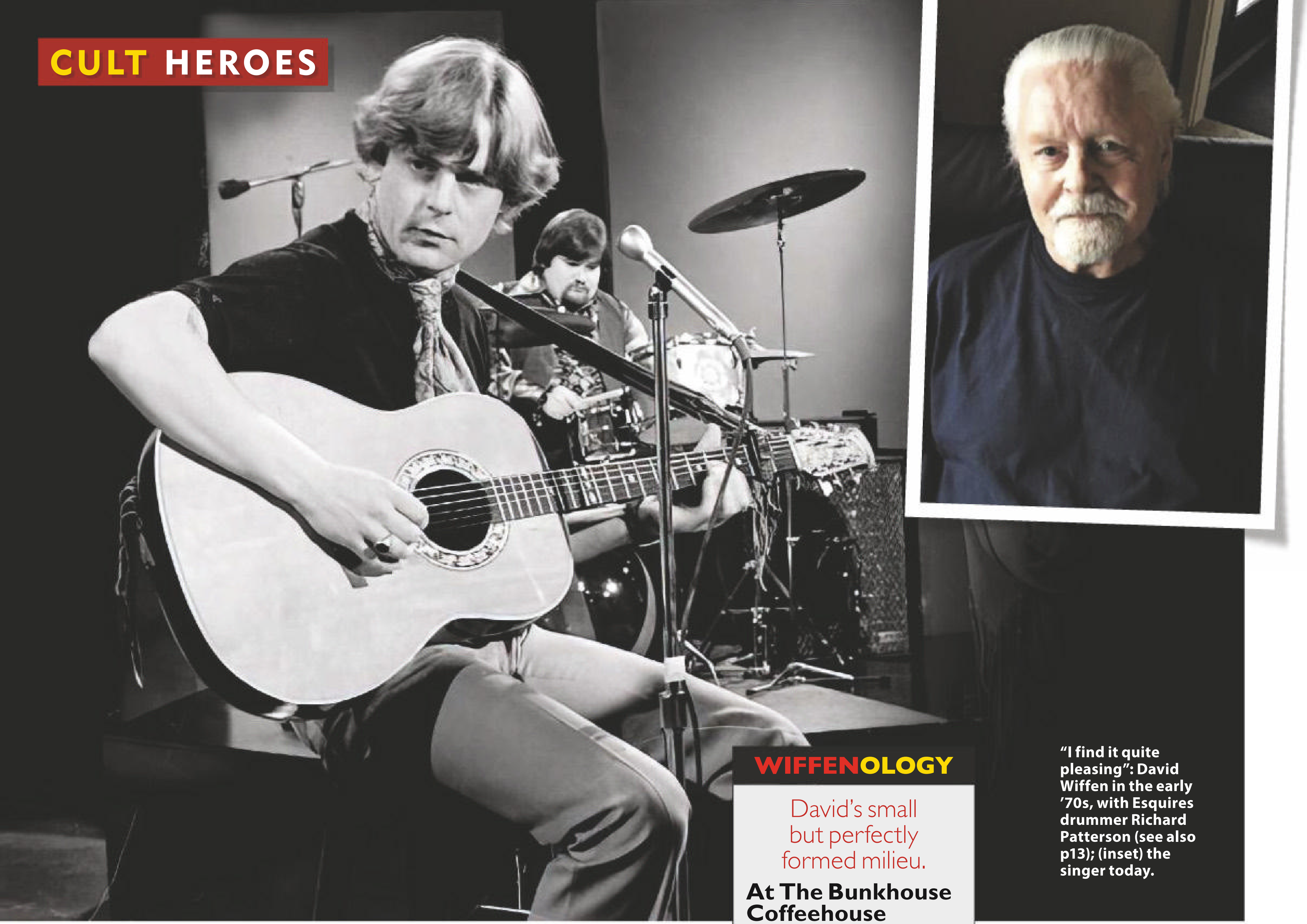
> **"Recordings by Michael Garrick, Mike Westbrook and John Surman are what really inspired me."**
> **SHABAKA HUTCHINGS**

Decca's British Jazz Explosion series starts with The Don Rendell Quintet's Space Walk, Ken Wheeler And The John Dankworth Orchestra's Windmill Tilter, and Le Dejeuner Sur L'Herbe by The New Jazz Orchestra

Getty



Anglo-sax chronicle: John Surman; (insets) a UK jazz jewel (top) and the new Decca set.



“I find it quite pleasing”: David Wiffen in the early ’70s, with Esquires drummer Richard Patterson (see also p13); (inset) the singer today.

MASTER SONGWRITER DAVID WIFFEN GETS BACK TO THE BUNKHOUSE

SOMETIME IN the ’70s, singer-songwriter David Wiffen was support act on a six-week tour of Ontario when, in front of a packed house, he heard the main act open his set with a song he dedicated to Wiffen. It was called Everybody Loves A Loser.

Declining to name his nemesis, an angry Wiffen (“thank God I had lots of hash and a good book”) reacted the best way he knew how. He wrote his own song – Fugitive, with the opening line, “Funny how a song can sometimes rob you of your pride.” The triumphant outcome would have been for it to become a major hit and transform his career. This didn’t happen. Instead Wiffen, whose long-lost first album *At The Bunkhouse Coffeehouse* is reissued this month, disappeared, awaiting rediscovery as a cult hero. “Cult hero?” he says. “I’m glad to be any kind of hero. To know my music is still relevant and is still played and enjoyed. My songs seem to withstand the test of time.”

> “I smoked a lot of hash and pot.”
> **DAVID WIFFEN**

Rediscovery came in part from various covers – Roger McGuinn, Cowboy Junkies, Black Crowes, Tom Rush, Jerry Jeff Walker and Rumer among them. “I like all the covers, but the Cowboy Junkies’ version [of Lost My Driving Wheel] stands out. I think of myself as a vessel through which music passes.”

Wiffen is closely identified with the great generation of Canadian songwriters that included Gordon Lightfoot, Bruce Cockburn, Joni Mitchell and Ian & Sylvia Tyson, yet his story began in Surrey, England where, inspired by Lonnie Donegan, he built his own stand-up bass and joined the Black Cat Skiffle Group. When his father got a job in Toronto, the family emigrated to Canada.

He hung out at Toronto folk haunt the Village Corner. “There were only a few of us and we were absolute beginners,” says Wiffen, “but we paved the way in Canada. It was a collecting point for visiting artists like Paul Stookey and Bob Dylan. I lived upstairs so I played every night, performing until at least 4 or 5am.”

In 1965 he went to Vancouver to join other musicians recording a sampler album, but a major snowstorm stopped anyone else making it, so he recorded *At The Bunkhouse Coffeehouse* by himself in three hours. Only a hundred copies were pressed, and it swiftly became a silly-money collectors’ item tagged “the holy grail of Canadian folk” (“A fluke,” says Wiffen). He later joined bands The Children and 3’s A Crowd before he got a call to go to California to make 1970 solo album *David Wiffen*. “I got quite a bit of writing done while I was there,” he recalls. “I spent time with Denny Doherty in LA, and smoked a lot of hash and pot.”

He made one more album, *Coast To Coast Fever*, toured incessantly, and then got out, supporting his family, for a time, as a limo driver. His next album was 1999’s *South Of Somewhere*, with the *Songs From The Lost and Found* collection following in 2015.

“It was fun while it lasted,” Wiffen reflects today. “I wish I’d done more concerts instead of bars and night clubs. My music is meant to be listened to – preferably in silence.”

Colin Irwin

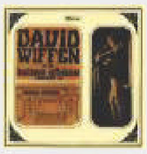
At The Bunkhouse Coffeehouse is reissued by Mapache.

WIFFENOLOGY

David’s small but perfectly formed milieu.

At The Bunkhouse Coffeehouse

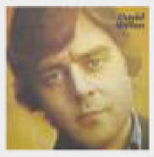
(INTERNATIONAL RECORDS, 1965)



A telling glimpse of time, place and mindset. Compelling covers of Four Strong Winds, Don’t Think Twice and Muleskinner Blues, alongside his own Slice Of Life remind you why the album was so sought after.

David Wiffen

(FANTASY, 1971)



Beside famous songs Lost My Driving Wheel and More Often Than Not, there’s Mr Wiffen Is Incommunicado, later covered by Harry Belafonte as Ol’ Harry Is Incommunicado. “I find it quite pleasing,” Wiffen says, understatedly.

Songs From The Lost & Found

(TRUE NORTH, 2015)

Originally planned as the follow-up to 1973’s *Coast To Coast Fever*, these 2015 bluesy reveries – including Fugitive – partly explained why he bailed when he did.

Courtesy of Ian McLeish, David Wiffen

Tot Taylor / frisbee

ten new toons

a song about Donald and
a song for Yoko...
a song about cars and 'Abba's new record'...
a song of summer and a song from school...

ritten at the Red House, rehearsed at Red Lodge
Recorded at RAK with the Byatt Unit Symphony
mixed at RAK & Riverfish

LP hardcard deluxe, 180 gm vinyl
500 copies only exclusively @RoughTrade

Playlist: 'THIS IS Tot Taylor' @Spotify

www.tottaylor.com

“I was a gorilla this morning.”
JOE EVANS, W.H. LUNG

Pond life: W.H. Lung get in the swim (from left) Hannah Peace, Joe Evans, Alex Mercer Main, Tom Sharkett, Chris Mulligan.

Adrian Davies

MEET W.H. LUNG, MANCHESTER’S NEW KING MONKEYS

“I WAS A gorilla this morning.” Suddenly emerging from the fringes of Hampstead Heath, W.H. Lung’s frontman Joe Evans describes what he’s been doing earlier as part of his acting course at London’s Central School of Speech and Drama. While making his way to a bench by a pond, he explains that getting the eyes right is crucial, as they give nothing away: a gorilla’s actions aren’t telegraphed.

In person, the day-to-day Evans is amiable, direct and excited about W.H. Lung’s forthcoming second album *Vanities*, the follow-up to 2019’s *Incidental Music*. The band – Evans plus co-songwriter Tom Sharkett (guitar), Alex Mercer Main (drums), Chris Mulligan (bass, guitar/synths) and Hannah Peace (synths/vocals) – consciously made an album for dancing. Where their debut revolved around motorik rhythms, W.H. Lung’s new music is alive with the directness of house, an ecstatic dance-rock hybrid with shades of New Order and hints of a Happy Mondays swagger.

The inspirations for *Vanities* actually range from Manchester’s Wet Play club nights, Andrew Weatherall, the countryside of the Calder Valley outside Manchester, the philosopher G.I. Gurdjieff, and Van Gogh’s channelling of nature. Evans has been undertaking intense self-examination through deep meditation and yoga, and the resulting lyrics can be oblique.

“It’s not as if I would go into myself to find lyrics,” he laughs. “It’s more that in the process you have a heightened sense of intuition and it all comes more freely.” During album opener Calm Down, he sings, “Souped up by decree, I drop my trousers to the monarchy.”

Vanities’ most immediate track is the lead single Pearl In The Palm, with a video Evans made in rural Ireland on an iPhone. A donkey named Winnie features. Figure With Flowers, meanwhile, seems to feed Peter Gabriel through a trance filter. The band, like so many, are itching to get back onto a stage where, during their white-light intense live shows, Evans exhorts the audience, inviting them forwards with open palms, dropping to his knees, freezing, often lost in the rapture. Collapsing into a foetal ball, he’ll roll side-to-side, surrendering to the music. After shows, he rarely remembers his spontaneous stage behaviour.

“We just want to perform,” he says. “To engage with the audience, to have that exchange. It’s what I’m compelled to do. That for me is the greatest expression of music, there’s nothing like sharing it.” And will the gorilla surface? He won’t know until it happens.

Kieron Tyler

Vanities is out on Melodic on September 3.

FACT SHEET

- For fans of: LCD Soundsystem, Happy Mondays, Todd Terje, Spiritualized
- W.H. Lung are named after an East Asian cash and carry in Manchester.
- Before recording *Vanities*, W.H. Lung moved from Manchester to Todmorden. The album’s aural spaciousness reflects the switch from urban to rural.
- The title *Vanities* draws from the book A Little Life, where Hanya Yanagihara writes: “The vanities – hair, makeup, costume – hurry over to descend upon him as if he is carrion… he has the strange sensation that he is gone, that he is suspended, and that his very life is an imagining.”

KEY TRACKS

- Pearl In The Palm
- Figure With Flowers
- Showstopper

GARAGE-ROCK ROYALTY'S CHOSEN SON TURNS ON THE HEAT WITH NEXT-GEN PUNKS THE SHADRACKS

"MY OLD MAN doesn't listen to music around the house, and we'll have Radio 3 on in the car," reveals 21-year-old Huddie Hamper, son of Billy Childish, notorious gentleman purveyor of garage rock.

That said, Huddie, named after Leadbelly, could hardly avoid being conditioned by his extraordinary childhood. It was a world where music made after Jimi Hendrix discarded his pixie boots (post-*Are You Experienced?*) was tacitly verboten, and creative endeavour was a daily given. Yet, with *From Human Like Forms*, Hamper Jr's second long-player fronting the biblically christened The Shadracks, he's started to emerge from his father's shadow.

> "Why can't I play Help! straight away?"
> **HUDDIE HAMPER**

At home in Chatham, Kent, his first iPod, aged 11, was loaded with such Childish-selected relics as The Beatles' red album, plus some Arthur Alexander, Chuck Berry and Jimmy Reed. "Around that time," says Hamper, "I had guitar lessons, and I wasn't any good at it. I thought, 'Why can't I play Help! straight away? I can't be arsed with this…' Then when I was about 16, I decided I wanted to play again, just from listening to The Troggs, and thinking, 'That sounds good, and not too difficult!'"

A fortuitous meeting with Elisa Abednego, from nearby Strood (of Childish's Strood Lights fame) provided him with a drummer, and after cutting his teeth on Louie Louie and Buzzcocks' Boredom, the following year he had enough of a self-penned repertoire for his dad to instigate and produce an ultra-basic debut Shadracks LP. In the subsequent four years, the trio acquired a "more proficient" bassist in Rhys Webb, moonlighting from The Horrors, while Huddie graduated from a three-year course at Slade School of Fine Art and, he says, "got mildly better at playing guitar, and a fair bit better at writing songs".

He's also defied paternal guidelines to absorb Pixies and Nirvana and, in the process, develop a style of his own, characterised by withering post-punk poetry and mangled riffs extrapolated from '60s classics such as I Can't Explain and Interstellar Overdrive. If there's dislocation and disaffection aplenty in the lyrics, he reasons that it's because "that's what it feels like to be 21".

All this can be heard on *From Human Like Forms*, which was again produced by Hamper Sr, in four days flat. "My old man can just smash out a song in a night," says Hamper Jr, "but I can't. I need time to see what I think about it. Dad's incredibly fast paced and moves through everything with a real speed and attitude. Which is amazing, but it doesn't allow a lot of time thinking."

Did they clash over musical direction?

"No, I think he really appreciates these songs. They definitely have some Medway roots, but he embraces the fact that we've moved on a bit. That made it more enjoyable for him as well."

Andrew Perry

From Human Like Forms is out on August 13 on Damaged Goods.

FACT SHEET

- For fans of: Buff Medways, The Horrors, Buzzcocks
- Huddie's mum, Kyra De Connick, AKA Kyra Rubella, played in Thee Headcoatees, twin band to Billy Childish's Thee Headcoats.
- The Shadracks' self-titled debut included a cover of Buzzcocks' Boredom, and a forthcoming 7-inch features a blast through Time's Up, also from the Spiral Scratch EP. "To my mind, it's the quintessential punk record," says Huddie.
- For The Shadracks' new bassist, Rhys Webb, their producer's hastiness contrasted with The Horrors' painstaking methods. "We used to record like Billy at the beginning, really fast, but we've got into a bad habit of fiddling about for ages around a computer. It was really refreshing to see how Billy worked, and the new Horrors stuff has actually gone back that way."

KEY TRACKS

- Count To Ten
- Barefoot On The Pavement
- Wet Cake

The Shadracks (from left) Rhys Webb, Elisa Abednego, Huddie Hamper.

MOJO PLAYLIST

Load up with the month's best grooves, psych and punkery.

1 DAMON ALBARN THE NEARER THE FOUNTAIN, MORE PURE THE STREAM FLOWS

To sweetly shimmering frost tones, a soliloquy on loss and the heartache of those left behind. From new solo LP of the same name.
Find it: *streaming services*

2 ASHLEY SHADOW FOR LOVE

Deep contemplation in the Pacific Northwest from Black Mountain co-singer. A VU thrum underpins its multi-layered, darkly folky arrangement and rolling groove.
Find it: *YouTube*

3 KHRUANGBIN & QUANTIC PELOTA (CUT A RUG MIX)

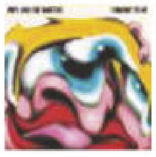
After overhauling Macca, the Texan trio have their own remix LP: Will 'Quantic' Holland brings a gyrating Latin groove lost outside time.
Find it: *YouTube*

4 SCOTT HIRSCH MUCH TOO LATE

Honeyslide-smooth hybrid of JJ Cale and Curtis Mayfield vibes from Ojai, California. Carolyn Dennis – formerly Mrs Bob Dylan – adds significant backing vox.
Find it: *Bandcamp*

5 DAMON & NAOMI WITH KURIHARA SAILING BY

Infallibly gorgeous Boston duo, plus Japan's most delicate psych axeman, salute their lockdown succour: BBC's Shipping Forecast.
Find it: *Bandcamp*

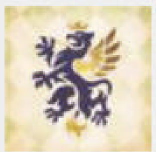


6 AMYL AND THE SNIFFERS SECURITY

Like '76 Damned with an Oz rock mullet, Amy demands love with raw vulnerability. "Let me into your pub!" From new album *Comfort To Me*.
Find it: *streaming services*

7 LOW DAYS LIKE THESE

Bursts of fierce static, disorienting ambient passages and, amidst it all, anthemic harmonies from Mimi Parker and Alan Sparhawk. A fragmented but rousing return.
Find it: *YouTube*



8 COLIN MOULDING THE HARDEST BATTLE

He said he'd hung up his guns, but the ex-XTC man returns with a pop-symphonic miniature.
Find it: *burningshed.com*

9 STEVE GUNN FULTON

From new LP *Other You*, the Pennsylvania guitar magus combines melodic spark, Zen garden shimmer and gentle tidal swing as he hears multitudes in the silence of the night.
Find it: *streaming services*

10 THE BUG PRESSURE (FT FLOWDAN)

Hyper-dystopian bass-techno-noise-ragga-hop? Step this way. From upcoming album *Fire*, which completes the trilogy begun by *London Zoo* and *Angels & Devils*.
Find it: *streaming services*

Linda Brownlee

MOJO
The Music Magazine
IN MY LIFE
Escape From Reality
KIDOLOGY
A RADIOHEAD COMPANION
MOJO HEROES
THE BEST OF 2020
PSYCH OPS!
15 new garage rock nuggets
Why Can't I Be You?
MOJO PRESENTS A TRIBUTE TO THE CURE
AFTERGLOW RARE! LIVE! UNRELEASED!
STEVE MARRIOTT
SMALL FACES • HUMBLE PIE
THE COLOURS OF SPRING
INTO TOMORROW
the BLACK KEYS present
THE HILL COUNTRY BLUES
You Gotta Move!
OH! YOU PRETTY THINGS

CALL: 01858 438884

QUOTE: FHAA

VISIT: www.greatmagazines.co.uk/mojo

MOJO FOR ONLY £4.50 A MONTH

Terms & Conditions: Subscriptions will start with the next available issue. The minimum term is 12 months. Recurring payments will continue to be taken unless you tell us otherwise. This offer closes on 20/09/2021. This offer cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer. Cost from landlines for 01 numbers per minute are (approximate) 2p to 10p. Cost from mobiles per minute (approximate) 10p to 40p. Costs vary depending on the geographical location in the UK. You may get free calls to some numbers as part of your call package – please check with your phone provider. Order lines open 8am-9.30pm (Mon-Fri), 8am-4pm (Sat). UK orders only. Overseas? Phone +44 1858 438828. Calls may be monitored or recorded for training purposes. For full terms and conditions please visit: http://www.greatmagazines.co.uk/offer-terms-and-conditions

SUBSCRIBE TO MOJO FOR £4.50 A MONTH!

SUBSCRIBE TODAY AND BENEFIT FROM:

- Never miss an issue
- Enjoy all the regular benefits of your favourite music magazine – including exclusive CDs with every issue - with our special, subscriber-only covers
- Free UK Delivery to your door / instant download to your Smartphone or Tablet
- Only £4.50 a month!

PRINT ONLY

£4.50 A MONTH WHEN YOU PAY BY RECURRING PAYMENT

MOJO
OH! YOU PRETTY THINGS

DIGITAL ONLY

£2.10 A MONTH WHEN YOU PAY BY RECURRING PAYMENT

MOJO
DAVID BOWIE

Happy
Being Sad

THE MOJO INTERVIEW

With **four strings** and a **feather boa**, the Manic Street Preachers’ iconic **Minister Of Aggravation** carries on the **Kulturkampf**, while reflecting on **loss and longevity**. “You are allowed to build bands on **hatred and delusion**,” insists **Nicky Wire**.

Interview by **KEITH CAMERON** • Portrait by **TOM OLDHAM**

“I’LL GIVE YOU A LIFT BACK TO THE STATION.” The last place MOJO expects to be after interviewing Nicky Wire is in a car driven by Nicky Wire. A previous visit to the Manic Street Preachers’ bassist, lyricist and *spielmacher* at home in Newport saw him recruiting brother Patrick Jones and bandmate Sean Moore as chauffeurs; his failure to pass even the theory test rankling for someone whose academic success at school came easily. Yet here he is now, humming along to Lloyd Cole & The Commotions’ *Rattlesnakes*, navigating the hills near the Manics’ Door To The River studio, then easing onto the motorway with only the slightest clench of the steering wheel.

“I’m a very instinctive person, really poor on technical stuff – that’s why I’m such a shit driver,” he laughs. “I said to Sean, ‘There’s no instinct in passing your test.’ He’s like, ‘Well no, you’ll kill someone!’”

Moore is not around today, but Wire’s other bandmate James Dean Bradfield greets us in the upstairs lounge before leaving Nicky to talk. Situated above the River Usk, with horses in adjoining fields, the Manics recorded 14th album *The Ultra Vivid Lament* here and at storied Rockfield, 25 miles away, in between lockdowns. Wire didn’t remove his mask once. Fond of solitude – promotional items for 1996’s two-million-selling *Everything Must Go* bore Sartre’s maxim “Hell Is Other People” – and famously keen on cleaning, he quips that he perfected social distancing long before it became a thing.

The new album is lush and deftly focused: “*London Calling*-era Clash playing Abba” was the shorthand blueprint, explicitly so in the nuanced political anthem Orwellian, amid an overwhelming mood of bittersweet sorrow. Wire’s father died in July 2019, only a year after his mother. “Certainly, losing both my parents hangs over virtually everything I do and think, in good ways and bad,” he says. “I feel extremely lucky to have had them but extremely sad not to have them any more.”

History and loss are intrinsic to the Manics psyche. Mementoes of a 30-year journey from punk iconoclasts to pop symphonists are all around as we settle on the studio sofa, Wire with a Coke and MOJO enjoying coffee from a mug inscribed with the words of Aneurin Bevan, a fellow Welsh working-class hero. On the wall, amid a collage of approved icons – Lana Del Rey and Michael Kiwanuka joining some perennial touchstones (Axl; Iggy; Kurt; Marilyn; Cozy Powell) – there’s an image of the young Manics at original strength with Richey Edwards, smiling at Karl Marx’s tomb in Highgate. The jacket Edwards wore in the You Love Us video is framed, albeit still waiting to be hung, in the hallway.

“I am cut from a cloth of just ploughing on,” Wire chuckles. “For me, the key line on *Everything Must Go*, unfortunately, is not ‘Libraries us gave us power’, it’s ‘All I want to do is live/No matter how miserable it is.’ ➢

WE’RE NOT WORTHY

Screen star **Michael Sheen** on a fellow Welsh wonder.

“Coming from Port Talbot, I was very aware of the unspoken rules of our culture. So the idea of Nicky wearing a dress to the pub in Blackwood in the mid-’80s was bold. Provocative, glam, intelligent – I related to that. And ‘Libraries gave us power’ is one of the greatest lines ever written.”

Tom Oldham, Getty

Thinking even the moments of terrible isolation will pass. Because they do."

As with every Manics record, the new album contemplates The State Of Things, but predominantly in the personal realm.

It's the inner migration, as I think JG Ballard called it. There's a certain amount of politics and the usual Manics traits, but lyrically, yes, it is a deeply personal record. And I don't know how that resonates in terms of our back catalogue. You could say *The Holy Bible* is personal because of Richey's lyrics. But it's not our *raison d'être*.

Opening song Still Snowing In Sapporo flashes back to 1993, touring *Gold Against The Soul* in Japan – is the band's history energising, or a weight you carry around?

It's always been an energising force, up until now, where it does feel pretty impractical, and subduing, at times. It's just fucking hard work being in a band this long! Not that we don't get on, but so many other things come in – ageing parents, kids, you name it. When I turned 50, I realised my short term memory was really degraded. I can't even remember if I had a shower this morning – but I can recall everything from 1993, I can literally smell the hairspray that me and Richey were using, or James's insane see-through blouse. So I tried to write that song in a really romantic way. At that point, we were completely on our own – there was no kinship with any other band in the universe.

Your son is at school and your daughter is at university. Was Nicholas Allen Jones a good student?

I was genuinely strange, because I found this way literally to do nothing but [still] get A's. Six A's at O level and two A's at A level – Politics and Sociology. I'm really bitter to this day that I got a B in English Literature. Chaucer fucked me up. It shouldn't be on the curriculum, it's literally just because it's old. We could have been doing Dylan Thomas or R.S. Thomas or Philip Larkin, anything. And at university I was awful. My predicted grades were so bad I went to Portsmouth Polytechnic… (*laughs*).

Purely because they would have you?

Exactly. I never said anything in class, I was unbelievably shy and reticent. I went slightly off the rails and I called my mum up. I had two A's and a B in my pocket, so she got me into Swansea because my brother had been there. At the end of the first year in Swansea, I got a letter saying, "Are you still in the university?", because I hadn't been on campus once. But I still managed to get a degree. Even though the night before one of my finals, we were supporting The Levellers at Salisbury Art Centre. We came on stage, and I said, "You can all fuck off and walk your greyhounds now." There was such a seething hatred towards us – quite rightly. Then I did the public administration exam the next morning. So I was terrible in university. I regret it a bit.

This was 1990 – did you have any alternative career prospects?

Well, I was also addicted to fruit machines, big time. I was £3,000 in debt. I redirected my mail to James's house, because I didn't want my mum and dad to see it. But I convinced the bank to give me a loan by saying I'd got a job in the Foreign Office. It sounds really bad now… So the dream in my head was to be a diplomat (*laughs*). I thought my politics degree would lead to a job as an ambassador.

Legend has it you'd already seen a bright sporting career thwarted by injury.

That has been over-amplified somewhat. I was playing football for the district. And I went for a get together with the Welsh schoolboys. The second time, I sent my mum to the bus stop to say, "He's not coming." Because I just felt really intimidated.

The story that you were offered trials by professional clubs – true?

Yeah, but I just never went. I know it's hard for people to understand from my 'stage persona', but I was chronically shy. That's why, to this day, I can still so happily recoil into myself. And I had discovered music by then. My brother ended up being a better sportsman than me, I think he played at Anfield for Swansea University. I've always been naturally unfit.

What did your parents do?

My dad started off as a miner, joined the army, ended up building – real physically strong. A brilliant man. Obsessed with history and with books. My mum was an evacuee in the war, came down here literally with nothing. She was taken in by a family in Bargoed – Uncle Will, our uncle by default. She got into grammar school, then did secretarial work, the dentist's, doctor's, that kind of stuff. Every day I wake up and think if there's a true privilege I had in life it was having them as parents.

Your brother Patrick is four years older – did he fulfil a musical mentor role?

He did. Rush was the thing. Which for a 10-year-old boy was a bit weird! We are massively into Rush, and Sabbath and Zeppelin, and I don't know if he was trying to get cool and trendy but he brought *London Calling* home, then took it back the next day because we both just couldn't fucking comprehend that. An odd moment. The Clash became such a formative thing for me but I rejected it for Whitesnake, initially!

Either of the first two Clash albums might have made more sense.

I think *Give 'Em Enough Rope* in particular. The first single we ever bought was Neon Knights by Black Sabbath. Amazing song. Dio's phase in Black Sabbath is really underrated. My brother was the mad one in the family. I was much more the mummy's boy, didn't have

A LIFE IN PICTURES

Wire images: postcards of a young man.

1 Happy bored alone: beach boy Nick Jones, New Quay, West Wales, 1979/80.

2 Thru the flowers: Nicky Wire blossoms in the C86 years, Risca, South Wales, '85/86.

3 The Glitter Twins: Richey Edwards (top) and Wire *really* on-stage at Manchester Boardwalk, April 29, 1991.

4 Rock'n'roll adolescents: Manic Street Preachers circa Motown Junk, January 1991, (from left) Richey Edwards, James Dean Bradfield, Sean Moore, Nicky Wire.

5 Cuban missile crisis: Fidel Castro meets the Manics at Teatro Karl Marx, Havana, February 17, 2001.

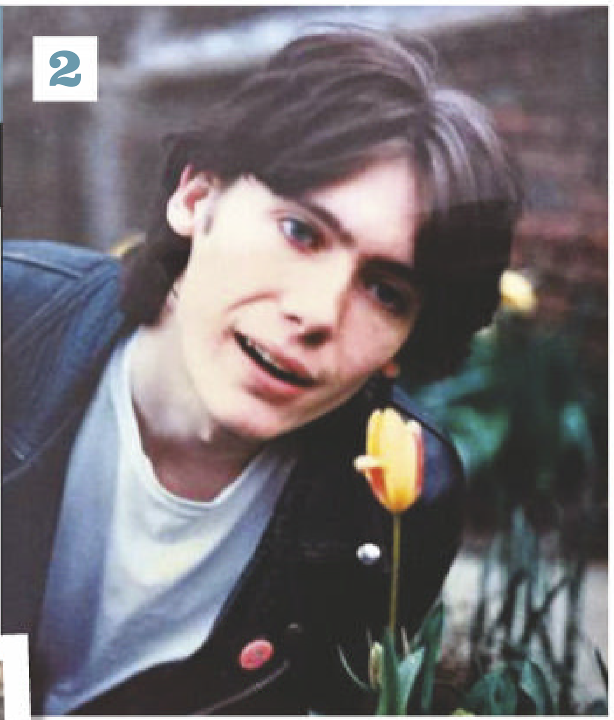
6 Cleaning up: Moore, Wire and Bradfield at the 1997 Brits, where Manic Street Preachers received awards for Best British Group and Best British Album (for *Everything Must Go*).

7 Wire with the Ivor Novello Inspiration Award, London, May 21, 2015.

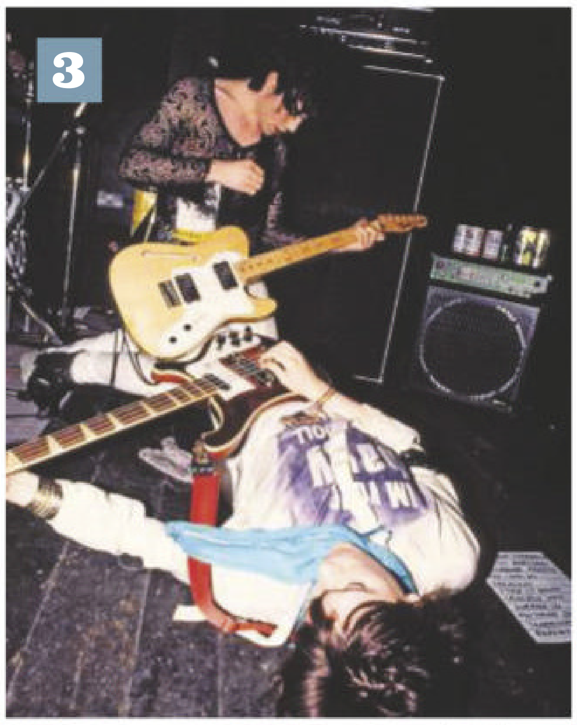
8 Doing it for the kicks: Wire takes off during the Manics' Glastonbury Festival set, June 28, 2014.

9 "I was the mummy's boy, very much the straight, sensible one": a resplendent Nicky Wire on-stage at the Phoenix Festival, July 18, 1993.

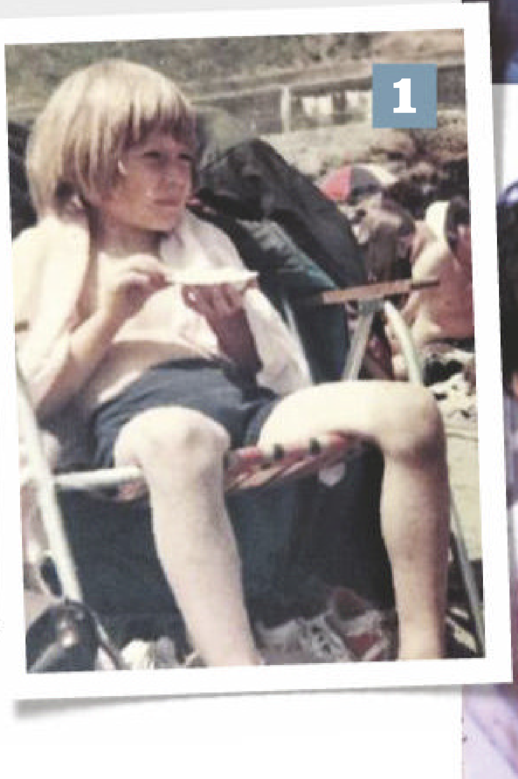
2



3



1



4

LONDON
GENERATION TERRORIST

Courtesy Nicky Wire (2), Tom Sheehan, Alamy, Camera Press/Ed Sirs, Getty (4)

a girlfriend until I was 16, 17 – no chance of it at all. Whereas he always had girlfriends. He went to America for a year, got married without telling anyone, to keep a green card. I was very much the straight, sensible one.

How did you first meet James, Richey and Sean?

Me and James were five and in Mrs Jones's class, and then in the same class right up through school. He looked like Radar from M*A*S*H. James was very *idiosyncratic*. I really liked that. Then we went to the same comprehensive and then Crosskeys College. When I went to uni, that was the first time we'd (*mock sobs*) been apart. Richey was in the same school but a year older, as was Sean. I knew Richey more because we used to play football together. He lived in what we considered the slightly rougher part of Woodfieldside and we'd play 'us against them'.

Then you presumably connected with Richey when you went to Swansea University?

The first year I didn't see anyone at all. I slept for 16 hours a day and watched Going For Gold. I was perfectly happy. Second year, me and Richey got really close. He was living in private rented accommodation, he was grown up more and totally in the flow of university life. He'd cook me food. Rice and Fray Bentos pies, some amazing meals actually. I hadn't eaten for a year! We'd sit there listening to the Wolfhounds and McCarthy. It was peak C86, there was a nightclub in Port Talbot called Raffles which put on the original My Bloody Valentine when they had David [Conway] the singer – when I liked them. Darling Buds, Wedding Present… We sort of started hatching plans. He wasn't in the band then – we had done [first single] Suicide Alley, by this point – but it felt like it was only a matter of time. They were great days. Waiting for Happy Mondays to come on at a disco and having that moment amongst aeons of dross.

With [1991 single] Motown Junk you looked and sounded out of step with the times. You later said you knew you would be laughed at – where did that resilience come from?

I think I get it from my dad. I always felt he could solve any problem through sheer force of will. In school, I looked like a girl, I had really long blond hair. I was called Shirley, and things a lot worse. But even that didn't bother me.

“We were so tight, the four of us, buying into an aesthetic: be larger than life, be bulletproof.”

You are allowed to build bands on hatred and delusion. Not any more, obviously, but it is a valid way to have protective armour. We were so tight at that point, the four of us, buying into an aesthetic: be larger than life, be bulletproof. The Clash and Guns N'Roses were undoubtedly the two things we honed down to. We did love The Stone Roses as well, such a cool arrogance, and a real muso playability which James loved. But there's three brilliant musicians in the Roses – we had one and a half. Sean would become one, but me and Richey were really fucking not.

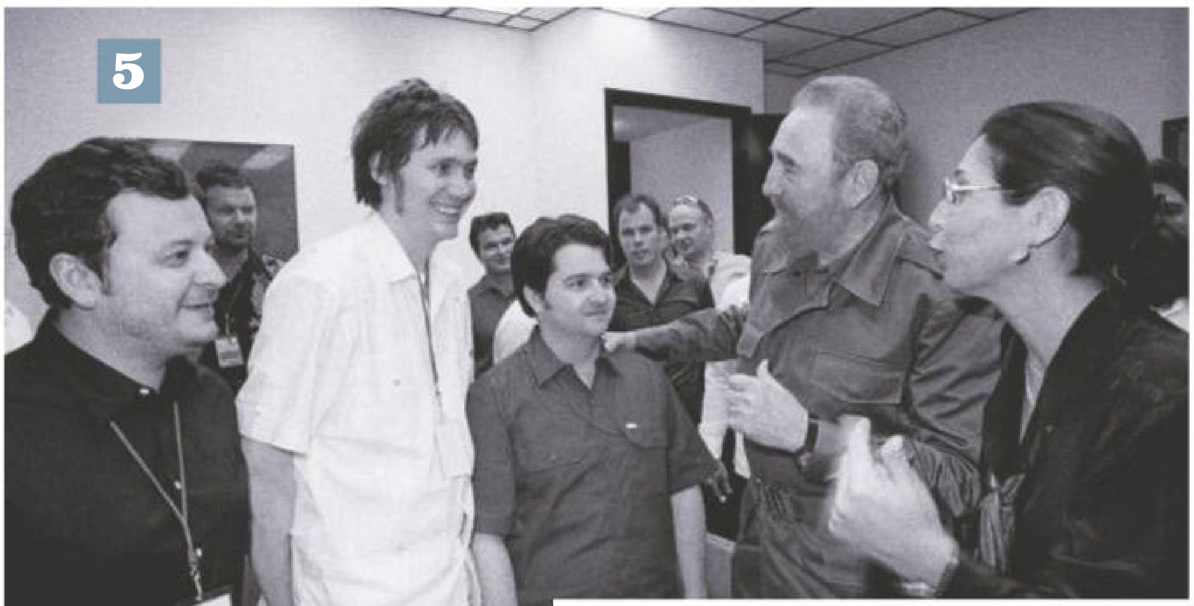
You seemed like a religious cult, with the millennial edict to sell 16 million copies of your debut album then split. Were there dissenters in the choir?

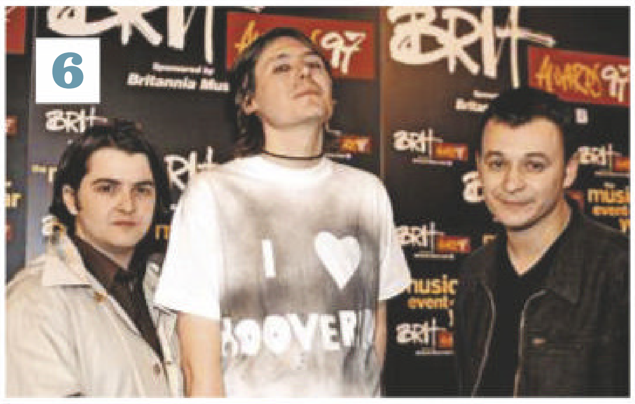
There was dissent. James and Sean were broadening their musical horizons so much, and me and Richey were building everything into a cul-de-sac of no escape. There were times on-stage where I would just not be playing the right thing, then Richey would throw the guitar down, and it would just be like The White Stripes! I could see James and Sean wincing at some of the stuff me and Richey were saying, and quite rightly so. But there was always a benchmark song – Motown Junk, Motorcycle Emptiness, Little Baby Nothing – which showed James and Sean progressing really quickly. There's a certain something about Motown Junk, which you can only do by being young. I still don't know how we made that record.

Were you surprised how quickly things moved for you?

Yeah, because we hadn't been formed *jamming*…! We literally formed through talking in a bedroom. We planned everything, and then when it actually fell into place and we're on the cover of NME and we get Top Of The Pops, we're like, “Fucking hell, this is easy!” A lot of that is down to James and Sean shouldering the musical weight. When we recorded Motorcycle Emptiness we did think, “How can we not dominate the world?” Then we switched on Top Of The Pops and Smells Like Teen Spirit was on. And we just felt 100 per cent wrong. All of a sudden everyone was dressed like tramps, and we were glamming it up over the globe.

You and Richey were a provocateur tag-team in interviews, whereas on-stage that role seemed yours alone – the most notorious instance being “Here's hoping Michael Stipe goes the same way as


5


6

7

PRS FOR MUSIC
BASCA
IVORS

8

9

I know
I believe
in nothing
but it is
my nothing
MAKE ART
NOT WAR
BERLIN
WALES

“You see left-leaning actors and pop stars queuing up to get OBEs. I’d rather stab my eyes out with a pencil”: Nicky Wire tunes in, Door To The River Studio, Newport, May 20, 2021.

“I’m always **dubious about people** who say they have **no regrets.** I have millions. I **deeply regret** some **mad things,** just *awful* **things I said.”**

< Freddie Mercury”. Was that a persona you had to summon up or did it come naturally to you?

It is strange… because I’m not lying when I talk about my shyness when I was young. I’m always dubious about people who say they have no regrets. I have millions. I deeply regret some mad things, just *awful* things I said. Spiteful things. And I haven’t got any excuse. Sometimes I was absolutely hammered on Babycham and vodka. You do forget how much drink can alter you. I haven’t had a drink for 11 years. Not a big crisis or anything, just, “I’ve got kids and I can’t get up in the morning any more.” My daughter really loves to pick these things up. At the dinner table she’ll say, “You can’t talk, Dad. Look what you said in 1992, look what you said in ’94…”

So your daughter has read your old press?

Only to say bad things about me. I’m irrelevant in my own house. Having said that, she does nick a lot of my old clothes!

The circumstances and impact of Richey’s disappearance, in February 1995, have been well explored. But what about the long-term effect on you?

I’m a big, big believer in bottling things up! Philip dying first was equally traumatic [manager Philip Hall died of cancer in December 1993]. This newlywed guy took these four kids from Wales into his house. Such generosity. Such an instinctively clever man. Then Richey coming soon after that, it gave me a real coping mechanism with some deep-rooted sense of loss. Those two instances, much like my mum and dad now, they hang over you all the time. It’s not always destructive either, because there’s some blazingly beautiful moments.

Do you think the band would have endured as long as it has had Richey stuck around?

God, that is tough. It depends which Richey you’re talking about, I guess. Maybe not, from his point of view. We would have got back to writing lyrics together more, definitely. I think there’s two big misconceptions. One, that I never wrote any lyrics before *The Holy Bible*, which does get a bit galling at times. Y’know, “Oh, Motorcycle Emptiness, did something on that, did you?” And also, musical direction. *The Holy Bible* is James. Sean is amazing on that album too, but it is James saying, “I’m John McGeoch here.” Obviously Richey’s lyrics helped inform that, but it’s still James. And James was gonna make *Everything Must Go* whatever lyrics there were. I mean, Small Black Flowers That Grow In The Sky – we’re doing massive gigs, we’d sold two million albums and there’d be couples in the crowd singing “Harvest your ovaries, dead mother’s crawl”. So there was still a case that we could have used Richey’s lyrics.

You’ve evoked him in songs, like Cardiff Afterlife and Your Love Alone Is Not Enough, and on the new album Diapause feels like a Richey state of mind. Do you find

yourself wondering "What would he think of this?"

He's like a mental tick in my brain, when I'm writing something which I know is a bit half-arsed, to think, "No, he wouldn't have…"! And I really appreciate that. Diapause in particular, yeah – I can hear him, just pushing me on. I genuinely think that in the post-*Everything Must Go* Manics era these are the best set of lyrics I've written. I certainly put the most effort in.

In the *Everything Must Go* making-of documentary, Jon Savage said that album was where you "readjusted" your "relationship with Wales". Why did that happen?

I don't know why. I was the only one in Wales. Sean was in Bristol. James was in London, having the time of his life, and I was dragging him down into industrial history and R.S. Thomas's self-examination of Welsh culture. I was living in an old miner's cottage in Wattsville, up against the mountain, married. Something which was always in me, in a sporting sense, just clicked culturally and aesthetically. I was obviously having a reaction against *The Holy Bible*. I knew I couldn't match anything that Richey was doing on that. So I pared things back. It's even more exaggerated on *This Is My Truth…*, which is the big R.S. Thomas album. I'm not sure what Richey would have thought about that, to be honest.

***This Is My Truth Tell Me Yours* went to Number 1 in the UK and took you into the arena-sphere – was success tiring?**

Only for me. I was such a pain in the arse at this point. We were touring so much, we were a genuinely big band, things couldn't have been better, and I just wanted to be home. I love the record, it's got a real bleakness to it. But why I became so miserable, I have no idea. I was giving it the old, "Oh we're just turning into U2…" I think back now, "What's wrong with that?! Making money, people loving you…" But I just felt like I had become a musician. Which was just not what I set out to be. I was going through the motions. Which is what you have to do when you're doing 200 gigs a year. Not every gig is an event. But I could tell James was getting really weary of me. While this was going on, I was thinking, "To counteract this, we'll launch an album in Cuba, lose loads of money, credibility and make a ragged, half-arsed record…" Just bad vibes.

That record, [2001's] *Know Your Enemy*, is the quintessential great-single-album-hiding-in-a-double.

I concur. But musically I was particularly lazy and destructive. Constantly saying "It's too tight – can't we use the demo?" Too many lyrics just weren't finished. The original idea was to have two albums: one called *Solidarity*, after the Polish trade union movement, and one called *Door To The River*, which was the softer side. James just looked at me: "Why are you trying to do this weird shit all the time?" In a nice way. I loved Intravenous Agnostic, we played that once live – in Llandudno – and I was so bad on it we never played it again. Singing Wattsville Blues live… (*laughs*). Martin [Hall, manager, brother of Philip] was in the crowd and some bloke just shouted, "Get that cunt off the microphone!" It's all part of life's rich tapestry.

You once said you'd never had any doubt in the band until 2004's *Lifeblood*. Really?

True. Because even with *Know Your Enemy*, it felt like we were still really… big. And important. That press conference in Cuba was the most intimidated I've ever been: 100 journalists just waiting to get us. James and Sean stopped speaking straight away, like: "This is your fault!" I sort of danced my way through it. *Lifeblood* is very much a withdrawal album, I was digging deeper holes, to just piss people off – without even trying. There's certain bits of it we do love. But as a man who grew up with the Guinness Book of Hit Records, the fact that album went in at Number 13 just crushed me. "Not even in the Top 10?! How has this happened?"

Because it was delayed payback for the previous album.

Exactly. To this day, you see *Know Your Enemy* at service stations for £2.99, because they bought so many thinking it was by one of those commercial bands! In retrospect, it sold half a million copies. Imagine what we'd give for that now.

In 2006 you and James made solo albums – a post-*Lifeblood* crisis of confidence?

No, I actually think it was: people are sick of the band, we've just got to do something with no pressure. I wanted to do that broken, frazzled indie music, which is always my refuge in dark times. It helped me get into the rhythm of writing lyrics again, definitely. You do write in a different way when you're writing the music yourself. It's much easier to sing, for a start. When we came to *Send Away The Tigers* [2007], not so much depth on that album, but I knew that those words would be easier for James to sing. Which is not true of *Lifeblood* at all.

BARBED WIRE KISSES

Three salvos from a Manic's magazine, by **Keith Cameron**.

THE FIRST ONE!

Manic Street Preachers

★★★★

Generation Terrorists

(COLUMBIA, 1992)

Yes it's overlong, and some songs had already been better represented elsewhere, but the debut Manics album offered an essential inventory of the band's rock'n'roll culturecide. The Wire/Edwards lyric writing partnership was perhaps at its symbiotic best, while the diamond-tipped James Dean Bradfield riff mine repeatedly struck pure gold: no one else has ever written a song quite like Motorcycle Emptiness, the doomed youth anthem to end them all.

THE NUMBER ONE!

Manic Street Preachers

★★★★

This Is My Truth Tell Me Yours

(EPIC, 1998)

After *Everything Must Go*'s heroic relaunch of the bereaved trio, commercial vindication: a chart-topping album, anchored by glacially bleak songs inspired by Welsh poet R.S. Thomas, heralded by If You Tolerate This Your Children Will Be Next. 2018's reissue belatedly conferred album status on B-side Prologue To History, a delirious blast of peak Wire, referencing politician Neil Kinnock, rugby legend Phil Bennett, Shaun Ryder and a certain "poet who can't play guitar".

THE SOLO ONE!

Nicky Wire

★★★

I Killed The Zeitgeist

(RED INK, 2006)

Those who took exception to his lead vocal debut on *Know Your Enemy*'s Wattsville Blues most likely baulked at an entire album showcasing Wire's vision of a Dalek fronting The Velvet Underground. Yet *I Killed The Zeitgeist* was less wilful grouch, more unmediated lost soul, a succession of crumpled dispatches from his sullen Welsh heart, with naive melodies to spare and a genuine chiller in the skeletal Everything Fades: "Failure can be good for the soul."

How have you managed to sustain that relationship over 30 years?

It is bewildering. I do think we're at the point where it is more through telepathy than anything else. Luckily, we were coerced into having families at the same time. OK, James a little bit later than me and Sean… but the fact that we all can relate to this sheer exhaustion of keeping things going, normal life, band life. It does take massive effort. I mean, if you're not even relevant in your own house, it's hard to project to a whole country that you are.

For a successful group, your values seem to have remained consistent throughout: working-class, collectivist, unpretentious. Is that a valid perspective, or do people see what they want to see from a rock'n'roll band?

I'd agree with much of that, but over the last 10 years, I just don't know. I'm so riddled with doubt and contradiction now, even though I still kept to those principles. My kids have been through comprehensive education, I still believe in high taxation and all those kinds of things, I stay close to my roots… I haven't abandoned any of those things at all. But I don't know if they're relevant to modern life. You see supposedly left-leaning actors and pop stars queuing up to get MBEs and OBEs – and I'd rather fucking stab my eyes out with a pencil than do that. What was it, Weller and David Bowie turned down knighthoods? That's good enough for me.

Not a bad club to be in.

Going Underground was a lyrical inspiration on this album. It had a big impact on Orwellian, I played it five times, 10 times a day in the car. Because it's political without being political. It's 1979 and he's overwhelmed by culture and politics and "How can I get through this?" It's almost like you can't articulate – you literally have to withdraw.

Speaking of The Jam, the album's other non-political political song, Don't Let The Night Divide Us, mentions Eton.

That one really is The Clash playing Abba, a bit of Waterloo mixed with the Cost Of Living EP. There's a wryness to the lyric "Don't let those boys from Eton, suggest that we are beaten…" Like, we've got your number. I'd been reading a lot of John le Carré and his quote about Eton being a curse, the sense of entitlement and brutality that it breeds. We pictured ourselves in Brighton Dome with platform heels and star-shaped guitars, almost winking. There is a much undervalued side to Manic Street Preachers: the fabulous disaster of life.

Which one song would you hang your legacy on?

I think it would have to be Motorcycle Emptiness. It's probably the four of us at our peaks, four people coming together to create that landscape of existential despair. Because the production is almost cosmetic, it's actually pretty timeless, it doesn't sound like the '90s. There's just something about it. For such a complicated lyric, wherever you go people sing along. That's a pretty amazing trick.

Tom Oldham

THE ROAD

is long…

With voices in heavenly sync, THE HOLLIES made evergreen pop, until songwriting, drug differences and David Crosby sowed disharmony. Yet through splits and rifts, the group's prime movers are still with us and primed to reclaim their legacy. "We were always the underrated underdogs," they tell JOHN AIZLEWOOD.

Photograph: KARL FERRIS.

Stretching his wings: Graham Nash (centre) with (clockwise from top left) Allan Clarke, Tony Hicks, Bernie Calvert and Bobby Elliott in a proposed cover for *Butterfly* Karl Ferris's Hampstead studio, 1967.

MAMA CASS ELLIOT IS CRYING. Great big heaving sobs. They really should be tears of joy, since she and her fellow Mamas & Papas have just recorded I Saw Her Again on this April 1966 evening at Hollywood's United Western Recorders. She's crying because of a man she met 30 seconds ago.

"She'd asked what John Lennon would think of The Mamas & The Papas," chuckles Graham Nash, the cad in question. "All I said was, 'John's from Liverpool and there are some tough guys there. He will probably put you down until he feels comfortable enough to let you in.' I didn't realise she had a big crush on John and didn't want to hear he might be nasty to her. That was my first 30 seconds with Cass Elliot."

Nash was in town with The Hollies, the band he had founded in Manchester with his primary school chum, Allan Clarke. 1965 had witnessed their first UK Number 1 single, I'm Alive; now America was taking notice. By the end of '66 two singles – Bus Stop and Stop! Stop! Stop! – would make the US Top 10; soon there would even be a Shell Oil commercial. "Shhh," laughs the environmentally conscious Nash today.

There was more. Artists and labels were beginning to grasp the notions that albums were the artistic and commercial future and that self-written songs meant longevity. And so, on *For Certain Because…* (from the line in Teddy Bears' Picnic), the Hollies album recorded shortly after their return to Britain and released in December 1966, every song would be written by Clarke, Nash and guitarist Tony Hicks. It seemed that a glorious new Hollies chapter was commencing.

Once Elliot had gathered herself, she asked Nash what he was doing next. She wanted him to meet her friend, David Crosby. Nash agreed: "That moment changed my life forever."

As Nash left for the Hollywood Hills with his glamorous new friends, Tony Hicks – also in attendance – mulled his options. "The boys were at the Whisky A Go-Go on Sunset ➢

Photo by Karl Ferris ©

PARLOPHONE
45 R.P.M.
R 5287
I'M ALIVE
THE HOLLIES
MADE IN GT BRITAIN

< supping pints. I toddled off there. Graham has never been the same since.”

The evening set into motion Nash’s departure from Britain and The Hollies: the faultlines, he maintains, were as much between marijuana and beer as they were musical and geographical.

NASH AND HAROLD CLARKE WERE ALMOST forced apart before The Hollies. Nash’s father William spent a year in Manchester’s Strangeways prison for handling stolen goods. On his release, William was tempted to seek a fresh life for his family in Stevenage New Town. “Probably for the best we didn’t go,” notes his son today.

Secure once more in Skinner Street, Salford, Nash Jr began writing songs with his millworker pal, who preferred to go by his middle name, Allan. Their first effort, You’ve Got To Learn How To Twist, was undeniably of its time and the pair serenaded the Manchester coffee bar circuit with their covers-heavy set.

“We were acoustic until this guy Pete Bocking said, ‘You need a guitarist,’” remembers Clarke. “I thought we were doing fine, but Graham said we should make a change. Once Pete played the Be-Bop-A-Lula guitar part perfectly – I’d never been able to get it – we knew he was right. Then came bass, then drums. Then we broke.”

By the end of 1962 Bocking was gone and the band were The Fourtones, then The Deltas and finally The Hollies, after both Buddy and Christmas. In ’63, things happened with startling speed: the band were spotted at The Cavern by George Martin’s protégé Ron Richards, who’d overseen the first Beatles session for EMI and had judged Pete Best the weak link. Richards managed The Hollies briefly, but as EMI’s man in the studio would produce the overwhelming bulk of their output until 1980.

Signed to Parlophone, they settled on a stable line-up: Nash’s rhythm guitar; Clarke’s vocals and harmonica; lead guitarist Hicks; drummer Bobby Elliott and bassist Eric Haydock. By the end of the year, they were in the British Top 10 with a chirpy take on Maurice Williams & The Zodiacs’ Stay. In January 1964, they played it on the first Top Of The Pops.

The Hollies were the perfect storm. Clarke’s vocals were pristine but with a sprinkling of grit. Their harmonies were as tight as their heroes, The Everly Brothers. Hicks had a knack of returning from regular trawls around the music publishers of Denmark Street with potential hits. Richards was canny and versatile and EMI were desperate for The Beatles not to be a one-off.

But songwriting was not among their strengths. Hollies singles came from the pens of George Harrison, Leiber & Stoller, Gerry Goffin and Mort Shuman, and aside from 1964’s UK Number 7, We’re Through, credited to L. Ransford (after Nash’s grandfather L. Ransford Nash) but written by Clarke/Nash/Hicks, Richards restricted them to album filler. As Clarke recalls, “Ron said our songs weren’t A-sides.”

The Strange Things Archive, Getty, Henry Diltz (2), Alamy

THE HOLLIES
BUS STOP

the hollies
PARLOPHONE
KING MIDAS IN REVERSE
EVERYTHING IS SUNSHINE
Producer Ron Richards

Manchester united: (clockwise from top left) Clarke and Nash in early band The Guyatones; Holliemania as the band arrive at Shoreham Airport, Brighton, April 27, 1964; on Ready Steady Go!, November 1964, with Eric Haydock (second left); seduced by the States – in New York with The Lovin’ Spoonful and, in California, Nash with Cass Elliot, both September 1966; (insets) key singles including the divisive King Midas In Reverse.

Only the most one-eyed Hollies fan would deny that, from the perspective of mid-1966, Richards had a point. Hard Hard Year, on June ’66’s *Would You Believe?*, was a promising, Norwegian Wood-type strum with a searing Hicks guitar solo; Fifi The Flea – Nash’s solo showcase from the same album – was whimsical at best. The songs driving their success that year, I Can’t Let Go and Bus Stop (massive hits both sides of the Atlantic) were by Chip ‘Wild Thing’ Taylor and Graham Gouldman respectively. Yet The Hollies could see the writing on the wall. “When we saw The Beatles were writing A- and B-sides, we thought we’d get into that,” chuckles Clarke.

With Richards’ blessing, The Hollies upped their writing game on tour in Sweden that summer. Playing two ‘Folkparks’ a night, travelling in a giant American four-wheel drive with a trailer, Clarke, Nash and Hicks committed songs to a Telefunken tape recorder. Where songwriting had been a sideline, after Sweden, it became central to The Hollies.

The result was December 1966’s *For Certain Because…* (or *Stop! Stop! Stop!* in the US) – the first of three albums in 11 months where, L. Ransford having been let go, every song was credited to Clarke/Nash/Hicks. Its content was rife with clues that The Hollies

> “Normally Hollies singles would go into the Top 10, but when King Midas didn’t, they started not to trust me.”
> **Graham Nash**

were changing (Haydock had been replaced by Bernie Calvert) – notably, the trancelike Stop! Stop! Stop! – but the perky sound and melodic tightness still played to their pop-smart rules. “I brought choruses,” explains Hicks. “Graham would start with verses and Allan would kick in with a middle eight. It wasn’t always that way, but that’s where our loyalties lay.”

MUCH, THOUGH, WAS HAPPENING TO THE Hollies that would test those loyalties. Primarily, Nash had fallen in love with the United States Of America.

“Absolutely, absolutely,” the 79-year-old enthuses from the Manhattan apartment he shares with his wife of two years, artist Amy Grantham. “I saw what the country was, I saw the energy and I saw people who wanted to hear my opinion.”

The others would resist the temptations, but only just.

“In 1967, Neil Young and Stephen Stills came up to me in the Whisky A Go-Go saying they wanted me to listen to *Buffalo Springfield Again*,” says Nash. “They took me to their seedy hotel, sat me in a wardrobe, blew smoke in it, shut the doors and played it. Afterwards, they opened the doors and asked what I thought. I just said, ‘It’s fucking great man.’”

Evolution, *For Certain Because*…’s appositely titled follow-up, appeared in June 1967. The cover and the band’s psychedelic clothing were designed by Dutch mischief-makers The Fool, who would later cause havoc at Apple and have an album produced by Nash. Three months later came the single, King Midas In Reverse. Although not on the British version of November’s *Butterfly* album, it was the key to the future. A UK Number 18, after a run of five Top 10 singles. It was Nash’s baby.

“I loved that song,” he sighs. “It was very personal and The Hollies really liked it. Normally Hollies singles would go into the Top 10, but when King Midas didn’t, they started not to trust my desire to keep moving forwards and to talk about real stuff rather than ‘moon/June/screw me in the back of the car’ songs. King Midas separated us.”

“Graham was on a high,” suggests Clarke. “He was going to change the world with this song, so everything went in. The kitchen sink didn’t make it, but virtually everything else did. Ron wasn’t keen on it being a single and, although Graham was very airy-fairy about which way he wanted to go, we let him have his way. He wanted to do everything on his own. He was always very ambitious. He wanted to be recognised in his own right. I never cared about that.”

“I don’t know what the big thing about Midas is,” shrugs Tony Hicks. “It was a great recording, but it didn’t do as well as previous recordings, so we just pulled back a bit.”

The musical divisions re-surfaced on *Butterfly* (*Dear Eloise/King Midas In Reverse* in the US). The songs were again jointly credited, but now mostly separately written. Nash dominated, not least on Butterfly itself, which had orchestra, flute, distorted echo and, lyrically, a “lemonade lake”, but no harmony vocals. Despite Hicks playing George Harrison’s sitar on Maker, the album flopped, as had Nash’s power grab.

Hicks’s “pulling back” meant the next single was Jennifer Eccles. Titled after the then Mrs Nash, Rose Eccles, and the still Mrs Clarke, Jeni Bowstead, it remains the most twee moment in the catalogue.

“Me, Graham and our wives were at his flat in Hampstead,” recalls Clarke. “We said, ‘Let’s write a silly song,’ and we wrote Jennifer Eccles. Graham said, ‘I don’t want to do these sort of songs any more.’”

NASH HADN’T QUITE GIVEN UP ON THE HOLLIES. During the writing trip to Morocco which had spawned *Butterfly*’s Postcard, he had also written Marrakesh Express. The Hollies had a crack at it in April 1968.

“It was unfinished, there are no vocals on it, it sucks,” claims Nash. “When I wrote Marrakesh Express, it needed the power of a fucking train through it, but The Hollies’ version is lifeless, there’s no energy. I felt very brought down because the lads weren’t accepting and trusting me any more.”

“Ron Richards turned it down,” claims Clarke. “We thought it wasn’t a song we should be recording, because it was very druggy.”

“Allan was miffed he hadn’t written it,” says Bobby Elliott. “Mind you, I liked it because I’ve always been a steam train anorak.”

“As far as we were concerned, it was not a hit single. Never has been, has it?” chuckles Hicks.

Next came *Hollies Sing Dylan*, an LP of Bob Dylan compositions.

“Graham didn’t like the idea,” sighs Clarke. “He didn’t think we were good enough for those songs.”

In the meantime, Nash had fallen for the old flame of his new friend David Crosby, the up-and-coming Joni Mitchell. That summer, he flew to Mitchell in Los Angeles, where, among other things, he found a more receptive audience for Marrakesh Express.

“I played it to Crosby. He went, ‘Whoah, I know what we can do with this! Wait until Stills hears it!’ After The Hollies, I felt very encouraged that people I admired were telling me these songs were pretty good. They said, ‘Fuck ’em, come over here.’”

By the time The Hollies played London Palladium on December 8, the inevitable was about to happen. David Crosby’s cape- ➢

sporting presence didn't help an already tense atmosphere. Two days later Nash flew to LA, no longer with Rose Eccles, no longer a Hollie.

"It was a monumental decision for my entire life," he says. "I didn't even have the courage to tell Allan. I had Ron Richards do it. Allan had been my friend since I was six. I knew it wouldn't be fun for him."

Clarke remembers things differently.

"Graham told us he was leaving at a meeting at our London solicitors' office. We said, 'Hey man, you can't, what we going to do without you?' He wanted to leave and nothing was going to stop him. He had a plan and it worked out great for him, it truly did, but Crosby, Stills & Nash were three guys who got together and said, 'Hey man, we're going to make a lot of money.'"

As does Elliott.

"We almost had to force him out. Tony's a blunt northerner and he kept saying, 'When are you going?'"

"Graham dropped the hint about me coming with him," claims Clarke, "but I had a mortgage and two kids. Also, don't forget what was going on in America. It was all crazy, everybody was stoned on LSD. I could not be a part of that. I'm not one of the beautiful people, wearing flowing robes, saying, 'I love everybody'."

THERE WAS NO QUESTION OF The Hollies folding. Swinging Blue Jean Terry Sylvester replaced Nash and wrote with Clarke, while in 1969 Hicks found He Ain't Heavy He's My Brother. The Hollies' recording – featuring then-session pianist Elton John – was monumental, the crowning moment of their post-Nash decades, in which Clarke combined religiosity and the reverberations of Vietnam. Sorry Suzanne and I Can't Tell The Bottom From The Top were hits too, but the golden run was over.

Clarke fled in 1972, seeking solo glory. "Allan said he wanted to do his own album; Tony said, 'Well bugger off,'" remembers Elliott. Assorted singers were auditioned.

"Tony had seen this guy in Sweden, Mikael Rickfors," Elliott continues. "We brought him over, he sang a song called Baby. Ron Richards walked up to him, shook his hand and said, 'You've got the Hollies gig.' We were aghast. We were only trying him out."

Rickfors struggled with stage presence and the English language. "He looked the part, he was a great guy, but he would have preferred to stand behind Bob's drums," chuckles Hicks, ruefully.

Rickfors' arrival coincided with the success of Long Cool Woman In A Black Dress, recorded without the help of the ill Ron Richards but a Number 2 smash on Billboard. Alas, the departed Clarke had sung and co-written it with Roger Cook and Roger Greenaway (and John Fogerty, who noted its similarity to Creedence Clearwater Revival's Green River and secured an out-of-court settlement). "The joke was on us," laments Elliott. "We were touring a hit record in the States with a guy that couldn't speak English."

During the summer of 1973 Hicks and Clarke met in a Hampstead pub. Clarke was back ("He was greatly relieved," claims Hicks) and writing. The album, *Hollies*, featured just one cover, Albert Hammond and Mike Hazlewood's The Air That I Breathe. It would be The Hollies' last stand on both sides of the Atlantic, although when they covered Bruce Springsteen's 4th Of July, Asbury Park (Sandy) in 1975, they spent a night in Greenwich Village with the song's author. "Just a bloke, taking us around," shrugs Hicks.

1981's Stars-On-45-style Hollidaze returned the group to Top Of The Pops, who asked if Nash could appear. Old wounds had mostly healed and Clarke had visited alone and with his family. Nash flew to London and stayed for *What Goes Around* – a synthesizer-heavy album whose originals were mostly written by keyboardist Paul Bliss – and the subsequent tour. "A joy," says Elliott. "Then Graham went back to his business and we went back to ours."

A more existential threat to The Hollies than Nash's second departure, however, was Clarke's failing voice. When he pulled out of shows in Skegness, Leicester and Doncaster in 1999, John Miles became a Hollie for three nights. "The most amazing situation I've ever known," says Hicks, still awed. "What an artist. I called John at 9pm the evening before the first gig. He turned up at 11am next morning, drank a beer, then another one and another one. When it got to 3pm we said, 'Do you want to go through the songs?' He did and it was as if he'd been with us for years."

Meanwhile, Clarke's drinking had escalated to the point where his position had become doubly untenable. "The boys told me I wasn't doing so well," he recalls. "You can't go on stage for two and a half hours singing songs two keys lower than they're supposed to be. It would be a dirge, so why do it?"

After a show in Hanley, Clarke took the coppers he'd won in the band and crew's weekly sweepstake and left, never to return.

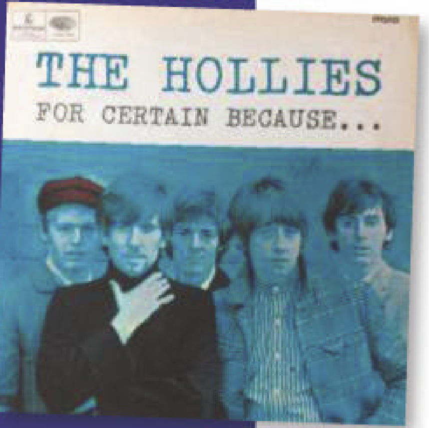
"Jeni got cancer," Clarke says softly, as his now-healthy wife looks on during his Zoom call with MOJO. "I needed to be there for her. We didn't know how many days we'd have together. You don't go to your grave wishing you'd played more shows in Hanley."

The Move's Carl Wayne was lead singer

EVOLUTION IN THEIR HEADS

THE HOLLIES TRANSFORM, 1966-70, IN ALBUMS, BY JOHN AIZLEWOOD

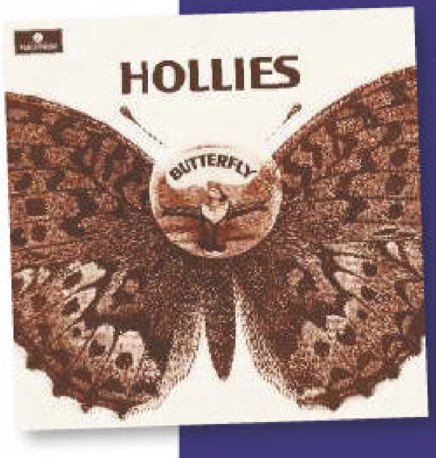
FOR CERTAIN BECAUSE...



(Parlophone, 1966)

Their second album of 1966 was their fifth in all, but the first wholly written by the Clarke/Hicks/Nash axis. Cleverly, they combined artistic evolution such as the sparse, harmonies-free Tell Me To My Face with the trademark supertight pop of Stop! Stop! Stop! and the marvellous Pay You Back With Interest.

BUTTERFLY



(Parlophone, 1967)

Nash's last stand as a '60s Hollie was their most psychedelic outing (even Hicks declared, "I'm Pegasus the flying horse"), but they gave it a Hollies twist on the CSN forerunner Elevated Observations?, the dramatic Would You Believe and, especially, Step Inside. The band were travelling in different directions, but it didn't sound like it.

HOLLIES' GREATEST

HOLLIES'
GREATEST

(Parlophone, 1968)

An expertly curated hits résumé, from 1963's Stay to 1968's Jennifer Eccles. Of the 14 tracks, 13 graced the Top 10 and, non-chronological sequencing aside, it's a flawless explanation of why The Hollies mattered. Most of the tracks had never previously appeared on long-player, so it became their only British Number 1 album.

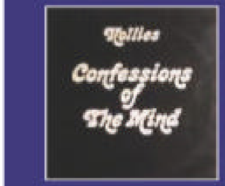
HOLLIES SING HOLLIES

(Parlophone, 1969)

The pointedly titled successor to *Hollies Sing Dylan* veered from the raucous Why Didn't You Believe? to the lovely Marigold/Gloria Swansong, via the whimsical You Love 'Cos You Like It and Clarke's anti-war Soldier's Dilemma. The UK version lacked an obvious single, but He Ain't Heavy, He's My Brother made the US cut.

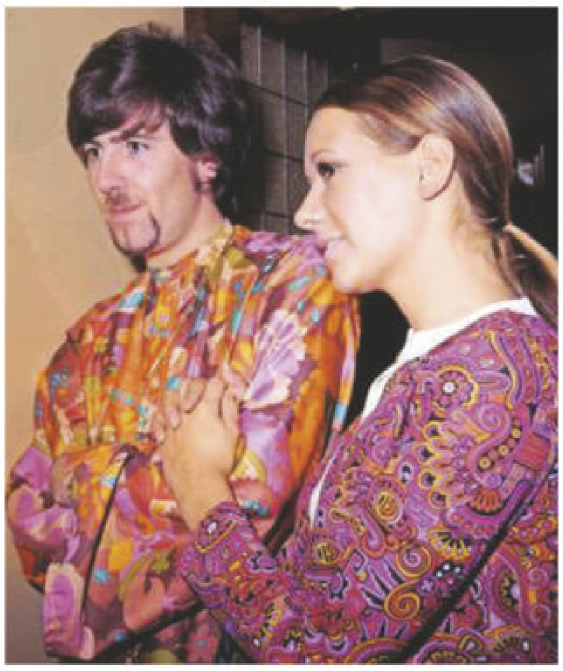
CONFESSIONS OF THE MIND

(Parlophone, 1970)



Their most expansive yet cohesive album. A thrilling opening double whammy, Survival Of The Fittest and Man Without A Heart are as close to the cutting edge as The Hollies would come, while the title track is a spiralling, adventurous *tour-de-force*.

Alamy (2), Getty (5)



On a carousel: (above) on Ready Steady Go!, circa ’65; (right) Mikael Rickfors, 1972; (far right) with new member Terry Sylvester (second left) in 1973; (bottom row, from left) Nash embraces flower power, circa 1968; Elliott, Clarke, Nash and Hicks reunited, 1983; Nash and Clarke as The Hollies are inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Famey, March 15, 2010.

> “GRAHAM DROPPED THE HINT ABOUT ME COMING WITH HIM TO AMERICA. BUT I’M NOT ONE OF THE BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE.”
> ALLAN CLARKE

from 2000 until his death in 2004. Elliott and Hicks remain in the still-touring band, but neither were alongside Nash, Clarke, Calvert, Haydock and Sylvester when the group were inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 2010, a year after Ron Richards died. “I told them to put the date in their diaries and fly over, but Bobby said, ‘We’ve got a gig in Brighton,’ and they wouldn’t come,” sighs a still-exasperated Nash. “My next call was to Allan. I told him it would be great if he came. He said, ‘My voice is no good.’ I told him his presence was enough and we did it. I was more proud than when Crosby, Stills & Nash were inducted.”

ERIC HAYDOCK DIED IN 2019. IN 2021, Allan Clarke remains a shareholder of The Hollies Ltd and a director of the publishing company Gralto (Graham/Allan/Tony), but time is running out for another Nash, Clarke, Hicks, Elliott reunion. The primary school friends still speak once a week. “We’re the best of pals. We never fell out,” shrugs Clarke, “I was just disappointed he left.”

A reunion with Clarke singing isn’t physically possible. “I don’t like saying this, but it’s a fact of life that Allan’s voice will not improve,” says Hicks. “He’s a great harmonica player though. As far as Graham goes, it’s more than likely.”

“I’d play in The Hollies again,” declares Nash. “But not without Allan.”

“After he left, me and Allan never had an in-depth sit-down,” says Elliott. “There’s no relationship. You know, maybe I should hold my hand out and say, ‘Let’s meet up for a cup of tea.’ It could happen, but we’re all proud. In this business, the music comes first and you grow this hard shell. As a person I’m not like that at all, but when it comes to the band, it’s life or death.”

And legacy?

“We were always the underrated underdogs,” muses the drummer, still be-hatted in 2021. “It’s a tough one why we aren’t more acclaimed. A lot of people don’t realise what we’ve done, but we’ve got to like it or lump it. Thing is though, I’ll never stop: you’d have to chop my arms off first.”

Nash, too, is reconciled to The Hollies and himself.

“I’m as serious as a heart attack about music. I still want to make people think and shake their asses at the same time. I’m not a perfect man, I’ve made my fuck-ups, but I’m a decent human being, I have a good heart and I’m compassionate.

“It took me many years to go back and listen to what I’d done with The Hollies, but pieces of it will last a long time. I’m proud to have been part of it.” Ⓜ

His real name is ’arold: Allan Clarke during his solo years in the mid-’70s.

The Hollies, featuring Tony Hicks and Bobby Elliott, tour in May/June 2022. Tickets via theholliesofficial.com/tour.
Allan Clarke’s solo album, Resurgence, is available now via BMG.

MOJO PRESENTS

R&B for homebodies? Americana for hipsters? Atlanta's Obama-endorsed yo-yo pro **FAYE WEBSTER** doesn't mind what you call her as long as she's improving, and at 23, she's come a long way fast. Her philosophy? First thought, best thought. "It doesn't have to be perfect," she tells **ALISON FENSTERSTOCK**, "and sometimes it's better when it's not."

Photography by **BRANDON McCLAIN**

Brandon McClain

FAYE WEBSTER CRUNCHES ACROSS THE GRAVEL OF THIS SPRAWLING SPACE THAT is not quite sure what it is. Outside former factory warehouses, one of which hosts something called the Immersive Van Gogh Experience and is painted with an interpretation of Starry Night two stories high, there are half a dozen shipping containers serving burgers, wine, beer, and slushy alcohol-based drinks. It's a short walk from Webster's house in the Kirkwood neighbourhood of Atlanta, past fast-rising construction sites and billboards that promise luxury retail and residential units – new additions since she moved in with her partner here at the end of 2019. "I'd like to get to stay here for maybe… two more years?" Webster says of this ominously upscaling part of her hometown.

Atlanta is hot on this June day. So too is Webster. *I Know I'm Funny haha*, her second album for Secretly Canadian, is her fourth all told, all made before the age of 23 (the album's release week coincides, in fact, with her birthday). An indie take on classic Southern tropes – country-pop and R&B – with songs that touch on loneliness and love, partners and in-laws, *I Know I'm Funny haha* is as assured as it is intimately whispered, a culmination of her work so far. The world has noticed, too: the album's smooth, soul-jazzy opener Better Distractions was chosen by Barack Obama for his 2020 favourites playlist, alongside Phoebe Bridgers, Bruce Springsteen and Webster's fellow Atlantans Goodie Mob.

➢

She knows she's funny: Faye Webster, Atlanta, GA, June 2021.

Georgia on her mind: Webster ready for a first take; (right) in the pink.

< "It was so random! And I found out with the rest of the world," says Webster, deadpan-witty behind a long curtain of straight brown hair. "I think Barack and [daughter] Sasha be listening to some deep cuts."

The buzz for Webster is rising in time with the slow reopening of public life, post-Covid. But Webster admits the forced nesting wasn't entirely unwelcome. "Honestly, when my tour got cancelled I was so happy," she says. She'd spent swathes of summer and autumn 2019 on the road for that year's *Atlanta Millionaires Club* LP, her first trek as a headliner, and there were big festival dates – Primavera Sound, Pitchfork – on the books for 2020. But when they fell to lockdown, "I was literally celebrating. I was just not ready.

"I like being on the road under the right circumstances, but I think there was a year when I over-toured and I had to cancel shit because my mental health could not do it any more," she explains. Her relationship with partner Boothlord, one-half of the rap duo Danger Incorporated, signed to Webster's former label Awful Records, was also still new. "So I just didn't want to leave home."

Luckily, Webster is a bit of a pro at staying home. She records demos on Garageband in her bedroom, the same way she made her entire self-released 2013 debut, *Run & Tell*. She plays Animal Crossing, chess and Pokemon. She practises the yo-yo, although without in-person competitions and meet-ups with other aficionados – she's *really* good at yo-yoing – it isn't as rewarding, she says.

Her other occupation was activism. Webster streamed shows to benefit musicians' aid and to support Georgia Democrats in the 2020-21 US Senate elections. "I wasn't going stir crazy, which I'm very thankful for because I know that people were," she says, "but it was kind of a natural thing for me to just not do shit."

FAYE WEBSTER GREW UP IN midtown Atlanta, listening to her parents' records: Asleep At The Wheel, Glen Campbell, Garth Brooks and Alison Krauss. Her grandfather and her mother both played guitar and fiddle. All of this has shaped her sound, particularly the spare, straight-ahead folk of *Run & Tell*, and she still favours the plaintive sound of pedal steel guitar, which bends gorgeously around her voice on *I Know I'm Funny haha*. Her first live gig was her fifth-grade graduation ceremony.

"I heard my brother playing guitar every day through the walls of our house and was like, I'm going to do that," she says. "I would just Google guitar tabs. But then my parents offered me lessons. They were like, 'Do you actually like doing this? We love that you love something – do you want to go play guitar once a week with somebody who actually knows what they're doing?'"

She made *Run & Tell* at age 16, and left Atlanta for a college songwriting programme in Nashville soon after, though she returned home after just a year. "I gave it a try, I gave it a real try," she says. "I just didn't like living in Nashville. I love *going* there – when I'm on tour I'm like, *Sick*. We're going to Nashville. Can't wait to spend one night there. But that's all I need."

What she did pick up at school was an interest in photography. If you scroll back far enough through her Instagram feed you can see her experiments in portraiture, showing a quirky eye trained on rich, saturated colours and weird, repetitive patterns. It's taken

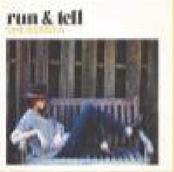
WEBSTER'S DICTIONARY

Twang, humour and soul from the weird, cool South.

Run & Tell

★★★

(Self-released, 2013)



The spare solo-guitar bedroom-folk debut, channelling and cautiously exploring where she fit (or didn't) into her supportive family's country music leanings. Complete with Springsteen cover (Dancing In The Dark), it telegraphs the 16-year-old's self-awareness and precocious wit. Even before high school was over she knew she was funny, haha.

Faye Webster

★★★

(Awful, 2018)

Soulful, intimate and confident, this tuned fans into a quirky, perceptive lyrical mind – creatively awakened by finding her tribe at the hometown hip-hop collective that inspired her development as a writer. Laden with horns and steel, it marries your internal narrator with the backing ensemble it likely always craved.

Atlanta Millionaires Club

★★★★

(Secretly Canadian, 2019)

A dreamy, introspective meditation cosily tucked into the crossroads of folk-pop and Southern R&B, exploring the difference between lonesome and just lonely in the wake of heartbreak. The title comes from the ironic name of her father's baseball-watching club in her Georgia hometown. Room Temperature has the glide of Neil Young's Harvest Moon.

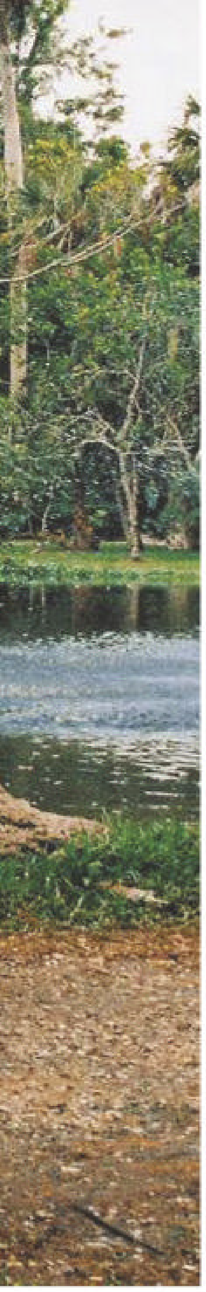
I Know I'm Funny haha

★★★★

(Secretly Canadian, 2021)

Languid soul meets country-pop in that slow Southern style. Romantic ballads nestle alongside goofy, transparent interior muttering – Webster's voice and beloved pedal steel effecting a *pas de deux* as she tells you what's been going on in her world, which is mostly in her head, or at least in her house.

Brandon McClain (3), Chloé Horseman, Getty



This joke’s for you: Webster in her Kirkwood ’hood; (top left) at Bonnaroo Festival, Tennessee, 2019; (left) Faye shows yo-yo championship form.

more of a back seat recently (“I definitely just do not have the space to focus on something as hard as I focus on music”), but an eccentric visual sensibility is still very much in evidence on her album covers and press images, where we find Faye stuffing melted chocolate coins in her mouth; Faye with someone’s foot on her head, balancing a baseball; Faye with a cow, or a flamingo, or (naturally) some yo-yos.

Most of Webster’s own portrait subjects are artists associated with Awful Records, the Atlanta hip-hop collective that released her second, self-titled LP in 2018. It was that community, particularly rappers like Obie Rudolph, AKA Ethereal – who signed Webster – and label founder Father, which turned out to be her real songwriting school.

“Watching them make music… it’s like first take, first try, and it’s out tomorrow,” she says. “I feel like from that, I was like, Why do I sit here so hard and try to rhyme? Why am I assessing lyrics on a page so hard? So I feel maybe just collaborating all the time and watching them work, it helped me realise it doesn’t have to be perfect, and sometimes it’s better when it’s not.”

THE ASSOCIATION WITH AN INSURGENT HIP-HOP label has encouraged critics to label Webster R&B (most memorably, “R&B for homebodies”). But even as soul influences crept into her songs, as on the languid love ballad In A Good Way, a standout on *I Know I’m Funny haha*, the pedal steel and its baggage continued to encourage ‘Americana’ pigeonholing. Where Webster “fits”, however, is not a question she’s especially interested in deciding.

“I’ve realised I don’t really have an answer for that question,” she says. “It just sounds however it’s supposed to sound, whatever it’s calling for. I recently went to the Apple store and the guy was like, ‘Oh, you make music? What kind of music?’ I was just like, ‘I play guitar and sing.’ That’s all I can say. Because if I say it’s a folk record, which it kind of is, that’s still misleading. And if I say, ‘Oh, maybe there’s some R&B inspiration, and it’s Americana, indie,’ that’s still misleading. So I’m just like, ‘I play guitar and sing.’”

It’s not so much what you call it, she thinks, as whether the truth of herself is coming across. As tourists wander to and fro between the Van Gogh ‘Experience’ and the beer kiosks, the previously chill and even-toned Webster gets animated. *Run & Tell* was released only eight years ago, but when you’re 23, that’s a long time: “It’s nothing I relate to,” she says. “I don’t know anybody that really fucks with their 16-year-old self – but it *was* me at one point.”

> **“ON THIS RECORD I WAS ABLE TO BE COMPLETELY HONEST WITH MYSELF, AND JUST ENTER THIS FUCK-IT MENTALITY.”**
>
> **Faye Webster**

The growth between the melancholy heartbreak tunes on *Atlanta Millionaires Club* and the vividly detailed *I Know I’m Funny haha* – coming off at times like transcription of her inner monologue – is what’s interesting to her, and what feels like a triumph: she’s getting closer and closer to explaining exactly who she is.

“The one thing I really liked about this record was that I was able to be so completely honest with myself, and just enter this fuck-it mentality where I just say whatever I want to say and not candy-coat it,” she says. “I just really got the rhythm of it, or just figured it out.

“I mean, I love it,” Webster says happily of *haha*. “I feel like when I came out with *AMC*, I was like, This is the best representation of who I am. And then when I came out with this, I was like – This is a little better. I think you get to know me more, on a personal level. There’s a weird balance between that and privacy, but I really do love it.”

And now, with dates on the books for autumn 2021 and spring 2022, Faye Webster is ready to bring it to her fans. The 2020 tour dread has passed.

“I guess I wasn’t ready then, but now I’m very ready,” she says. “So, it worked out. I’m ready to do it.”

Conversation with himself: Bill Evans pauses during his set in Lugano, Switzerland, 1967; (inset, right) Evans filming Jazz 625 for BBC2 TV, Shepherd's Bush, London, March 19, 1965.

MY FOOLISH HEART

Bill Evans WAS THE MOST POETIC AND INDIVIDUAL PIANO PLAYER IN JAZZ, MILES'S MUSE ON *KIND OF BLUE*, A SONIC VISIONARY. BUT HIS INNER SADNESS SEEMED TO INVITE PERSONAL CATASTROPHE, AND HE WAS BEWITCHED BY THE "DARK ROMANCE" OF DRUGS. AS A PREVIOUSLY UNRELEASED LIVE SET FROM HIS LATTER YEARS RESTATES HIS GENIUS, MOJO RELATES HIS RISE AND FALL. "WHAT HAPPENED TO BILL EVANS WAS A TRAGEDY," DISCOVERS Andrew Male. PHOTOGRAPH BY Giuseppe Pino.

ELIOT ZIGMUND WAS 29 WHEN HE FIRST played with Bill Evans. A classical music graduate of New York City College, the Bronx-born jazz drummer had spent his high school years hanging out in the New York clubs, checking out kit heroes such as Philly Joe Jones, Art Blakey and Paul Motian, before moving to San Francisco in the early '70s and playing with the Vince Guaraldi Trio; that's his soft brush style you hear on those Charlie Brown TV soundtracks. But Evans was a step up.

"I'd listened to Bill since I was a teenager," says Zigmund today. "Plus, my trio chops were kind of honed, thanks to Vince. I was lucky to audition and also calm enough to *do* the audition."

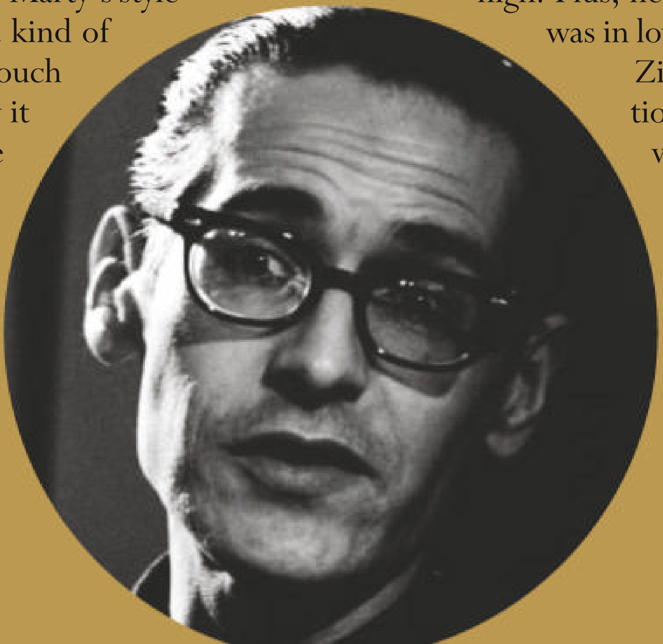
Auditions were held at the Village Vanguard – the legendary 7th Avenue jazz venue – across an entire week in 1974, with around 30 drummers trying out for the spot. All great musicians, but not everyone thought like Eliot Zigmund. "Bill had been playing with a drummer called Marty Morell," he explains. "Marty's style was tight, straight-ahead, precise. I played a kind of a broken time, leaving a lot of space; light-touch playing. I think when Bill first heard me play it kind of evoked something in him from the past. It connected."

Evans's past preceded him. Of course it did. At the age of 44, the New Jersey-born pianist had, in the span of two decades, become one of the most influential jazz musicians of all time. His nuanced, impressionistic work in the '50s as accompanist with George Russell, Art Farmer and Charlie Mingus already marked him out as one of the greats. However, it's his playing on Miles Davis's 1959 masterpiece *Kind Of Blue* that defines that album's haunting weightlessness, while the music he created with his own trios – plaintive, introspective music that combined the complex tonalities of jazz with the understated intricacies of a classical chamber trio – would come to define *the* jazz sound of the 1970s, most specifically through Manfred Eicher's boutique label, ECM.

Ironically, however, Evans's own status as a recording artist was in flux. He'd just left Columbia Records following a dispute with Clive Davis, and would move from Fantasy to Warner Bros, both of whom were looking for different ways to market the pianist, believing that trio albums were no longer selling. Also, after years of hard drug use his body was starting to fail him.

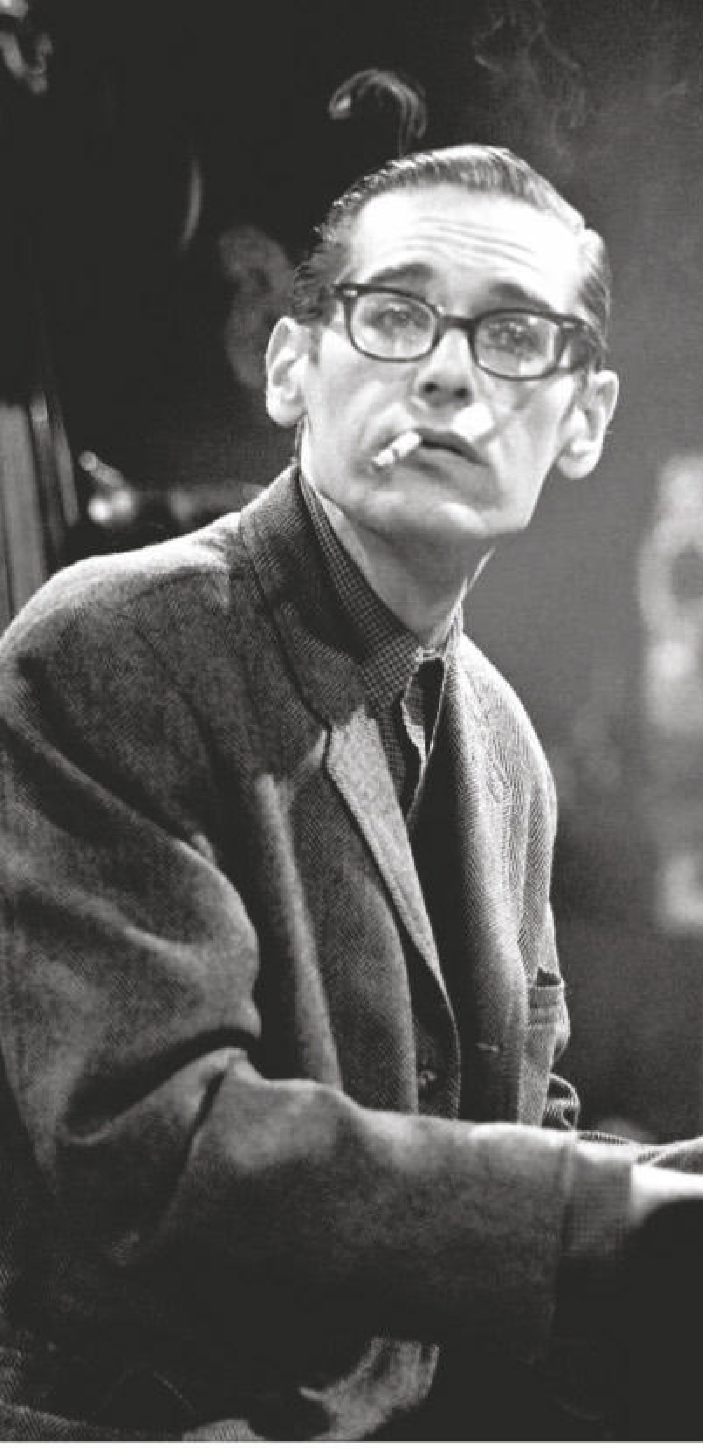
"He was in bad shape," says Zigmund. "He had chronic hepatitis. He was covered with pock marks from all the drugs he'd injected, but he was finally on a methadone programme. He wasn't getting high. Plus, he was newly married. He had a baby son. He was in love. Unfortunately, all that changed…"

Zigmund pauses. "It all ended in self-destruction. What happened to Bill Evans in the '70s was a tragedy."



Giuseppe Pino/Contrasto/Eyevine, Getty.

THE BILL EVANS WHO ARRIVED in New York in the summer of 1954 was a tall, athletic, awkwardly handsome 24-year-old from Plain Fields, New Jersey. A piano prodigy from age four, he had absorbed influences from everyone he heard, classical to jazz, Beethoven and ➢



"BILL HAD THIS **QUIET FIRE** THAT I LOVED. I CHANGED THE WAY **THE BAND SOUNDED** FOR BILL'S STYLE." Miles Davis

Bill Evans
MILES DAVIS JAZZ TRACK
EVERYBODY DIGS BILL EVANS
MILES DAVIS Kind of Blue

Getty, Alamy, ©Matt Evans, Photo by Steve Schapiro/Corbis via Getty Images

⪪ Bach to Nat 'King' Cole and Bud Powell. Recently discharged from the army, he'd spent a year with his parents, playing the piano every day, and developing his particular style: an easeful beauty that so captivated listeners they hardly noticed the fearsome technique. Leaving behind an alcoholic father, a mother who doted on him and an older brother, Harry, whom he idolised, Evans moved into a $75-a-month apartment on 83rd Street. "Just big enough for my piano and bed," he said later. "Woodshedding in that apartment, I made a pact with myself, I gave myself 'til I was 30. I think those were the most productive three or four years of my life."

While studying composition at Mannes College of Music, gigs and record dates came with clarinettist Tony Scott, trumpeter Art Farmer and the deeply theoretical jazz composer George Russell. From Russell, the bashful Evans gained a quiet confidence and an ability to play intense, complex pieces with a cool panache. His guitarist friend Mundell Lowe was so impressed with Evans's developing style that he phoned his producer at Riverside Records, Orrin Keepnews, and played a tape of Evans down the phone, landing the pianist his first headline trio recording: 1957's *New Jazz Conceptions*, with Paul Motian on drums and Teddy Kotick on bass.

"Critically it was well received," Keepnews told film-maker Bruce Spiegel, "but our total sales in the first year were just 800 copies. Then a year after it came out, Miles Davis became aware of Bill."

Davis had first seen Evans performing at the Village Vanguard in 1955, working solo opposite the Modern Jazz Quartet. Miles had started to write in the modal form, playing on one scale for a long period of time. "In this direction, you can go on forever… move into more melodic ways of doing things," he wrote in his autobiography. "Bill had this quiet fire that I loved. He played underneath the rhythm, like… sparkling water cascading down from some clear waterfall. I changed the way the band sounded for Bill's style."

"I first heard that sound around 1960," remembers jazz drummer and future Evans collaborator Joe LaBarbera. "I was 13 and my brother Pat brought home an LP called *Jazz Track*. It was the recording that preceded *Kind Of Blue*. Bill's playing really stuck out. It had an *identity*. He seemed able to extract every nuance from the keyboard as opposed to just playing a chord or idea. That sound got inside me."

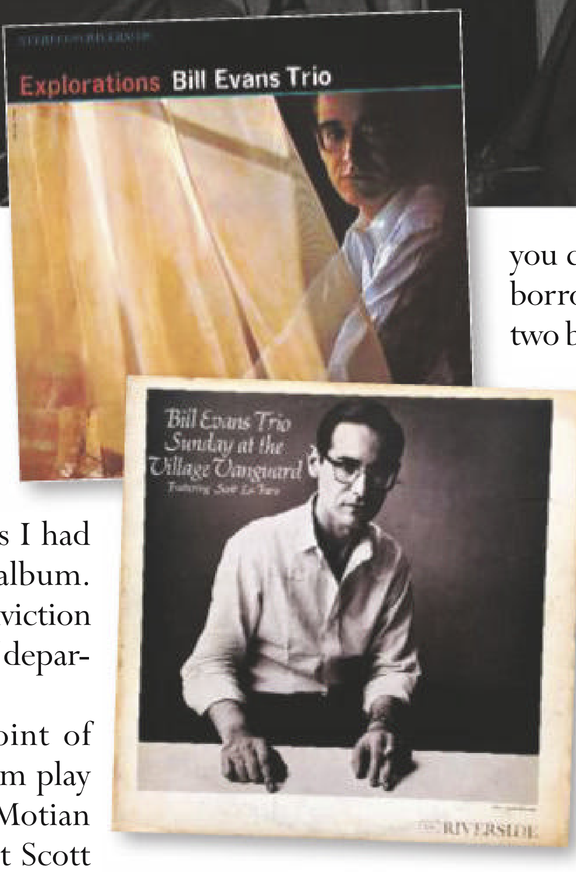
However, when Davis started recording *Kind Of Blue* in March of 1959, Evans had officially left the group. Out on tour with a daunting line-up of Davis, John Coltrane, Cannonball Adderley, Paul Chambers and Philly Joe Jones, Evans was beaten down by the strain of nightly gigs and the response of audiences who missed the hard swinging of Davis's previous pianist, Red Garland. "People were saying he played too delicate," said Davis. "I know that shit got under Bill's skin and made him feel bad."

THERE WAS, HOWEVER, SOMETHING TO EASE THE pain: heroin. On tour with Davis, Evans became Philly Joe Jones' Class A drug buddy, and the pianist committed fully to the role.

"Bill was a white middle-class American who grew up in the New Jersey suburbs," says Zigmund. "A vanilla life, you know? He told me he went through a lot of shame on the road with Miles, from people in the audience. Drugs got him away from that, and initiated him into jazz, into the noir life."

Heroin shut down what Evans called "the voices in my head", and

Portraits in jazz: (below, from left) Scott LaFaro, Evans, Paul Motian, Village Vanguard, New York, 1961; (opposite, clockwise from far left) Evans on Jazz 625, BBC2, London, 1965; recording circa *Kind Of Blue* with (from left) John Coltrane, Cannonball Adderley and Miles Davis; with brother Harry; Evans, leader and sideman, on LP.



helped him recognise the softness of his own style. You can hear it on his second studio album as bandleader, *Everybody Digs Bill Evans*, particularly on the track Peace Piece, a soft, Chopinesque unfurling of raindrop melodies, stretched to breaking point then resolved. That's the quality he brought to *Kind Of Blue*.

"It was one of the most comfortable times I had with a rhythm section," said Evans of that album. "There was always some kind of magic and conviction with Miles. Whatever he did became a point of departure for so many people."

Evans's own sound would become a point of departure for every jazz pianist who heard him play with his next trio, featuring his friend Paul Motian on drums and 23-year-old New Jersey bassist Scott LaFaro. LaFaro, who'd been hanging out at the Lighthouse Café in Hermosa Beach, California and playing with Chet Baker and Stan Getz, had recently returned to New York. He sat in for a gig at Basin Street East with Evans and Motian and, in the drummer's words, "that shit clicked real quick."

Evans's idea was something he called 'simultaneous improvisation'. "Rather than just one guy blowing followed by another guy blowing," he envisioned something more akin to a conversation between players, fluent, abstracted dialogues, dissolving the rigid lines between soloist and accompanist.

The trio's first album, *Portrait In Jazz*, was the perfect showcase for LaFaro's instinctual genius, the bassist filling the spaces between Evans's lightly touched phrases with clear, guitar-like patterns of his own. By their second studio LP, 1961's *Explorations*, a tension had crept into the relationship, exacerbated to some degree by the bandleader's heroin use during a cross-country tour. However, a semi-residency at the Village Vanguard throughout 1961 saw the trio hone their style meticulously.

"Bill was part of the New York wallpaper by 1961," says Eliot Zigmund. "I mean, he was just there, a presence. I was 15, 16, but you could get into those clubs if you were underage and borrowed somebody's draft card. I'd sit there all night for two bucks, just vibing on the concept and the technique."

That concept and technique was captured on tape on June 15, 1961, when Orin Keepnews recorded five half-hour sets of the trio – two in the afternoon, three in the evening – later released as two LPs, *Sunday At The Village Vanguard* and *Waltz For Debby*. Both releases are the sound of three musicians in effortless harmony, their unhurried sound seeming to float above the hushed chatter of the crowd.

"After the recording session I was packing up my drums," Motian told Bruce Spiegel, "And I said to Bill and Scott, 'Hey man, let's work more together. And they both agreed that, 'Yeah, everything's really clicking now.'"

Ten days later, driving home on an unlit country road to visit his parents in upstate New York, Scott LaFaro ran his car into a tree and was killed.

EVANS WAS DEVASTATED. "I'M THANKFUL WE recorded that day," he told jazz scholar Brian Hennessy in 1972, "because it was the last time I saw Scott and the last time we played together. When you've evolved a concept of playing which depends on specific personalities of outstanding players, how do you start again when they're gone?"

Evans's initial answer was to withdraw from life and, along with his common-law wife, Ellaine Schultz, move deeper into addiction. Orrin Keepnews' response was to hook Evans up with a manager, Helen Keane, and keep him working. A new bass player was found, Chuck Israels, but Evans only started to emerge from his shell in April of 1962 on a duet album, his first, with the Cleveland jazz guitarist Jim Hall. *Undercurrent*'s eerily gothic cover art depicted an Ophelia-like figure floating beneath the surface of a lake. In the grooves, Evans and Hall conducted a sympathetic dance. ➢

EVANS SENT

TEN MAGICAL *Bill Evans* TUNES, AND THEIR DEDICATEES, BY *Andrew Male.*

PERI'S SCOPE

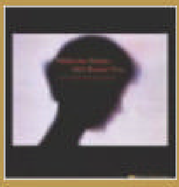
(from Portrait In Jazz, Riverside 1960)

STEREO
PORTRAIT IN JAZZ
BILL EVANS TRIO

Written for his then girlfriend, Peri Cousins, who'd complained that no one ever dedicated songs to women called Peri. A deceptively simple 4/4 dance, it's enhanced by the spaces that Evans leaves open and what bassist Scott LaFaro does with those spaces, adding a down-low walking-bass groove.

WALTZ FOR DEBBY

(from Waltz For Debby, Riverside 1962)



As Peter Pettinger writes in his definitive Evans biography, How My Heart Sings, Bill envied the family life of his brother Harry, and adored Harry's young daughter, Debby. This delicate swirling dance of melodies is complexly structured, with space for improvisation, but never at the expense of its beauty.

RE: PERSON I KNEW

(from Moon Beams, Riverside 1962)

Following the death of Scott LaFaro, Evans began to write more melodically nuanced numbers, tapping into a melancholy that he rarely spoke about. This number, dedicated to the producer who signed him to Riverside, is a perfect example, its puzzle-like nature extending to the song's title (an anagram of Orrin Keepnews).

N.Y.C.'S NO LARK

(from Conversations With Myself, Verve 1963)

Another anagram, this time of close friend, the pianist Sonny Clark. A hard-bopper in the Bud Powell tradition, Clark had a subtlety and economy to his playing that Evans admired. They were also drug buddies, and when Clark died in 1963, aged 31, Evans wrote this simultaneously percussive and lyrical tribute.

IN MEMORY OF HIS FATHER HARRY L

(from Bill Evans At Town Hall, Verve 1966)

Bill Evans at Town Hall

This 13-minute, four-part requiem was performed live for Evans's New York concert hall debut on February 22, 1966, just days after the death of his father. Based chiefly around his gorgeous 1963 composition, Turn Out The Stars, it also brings in shades of Satie, and quotes from Re: Person I Knew.

ONE FOR HELEN

(from Bill Evans At The Montreux Jazz Festival, Verve 1968)

By now Evans's manager Helen Keane was overseeing everything, and for his performance at Montreux in '68 she was apparently working front-of-house as well as supervising the recording. This frantic, driving little number might well be a soundtrack to her day and a nod to all her hard work.

WE WILL MEET AGAIN

(from We Will Meet Again, Warner Bros 1979)

The whole of Evans's gorgeous final studio album is a collection of farewells and love letters. The downbeat title track was "in loving dedication" to his brother, Harry, who had committed suicide in April '79, but there are also songs for his girlfriend, Laurie, and friend Conrad Mendenhall, killed in a car accident in 1971.

B MINOR WALTZ

(from You Must Believe In Spring, Warner Bros 1981)

Drawing heavily on the gentle melodic simplicity of Michel Legrand, this waltz tune was written for Evans's common-law wife, Ellaine, who had killed herself in 1973. It's one of his saddest and most beautiful compositions, from a near perfect trio LP, recorded in 1977 but sadly not released until after his death.

LETTER TO EVAN

(From The Paris Concert: Edition Two, Elektra 1984)

Written for the fourth birthday of his son, this is a surprisingly jagged number, seemingly not so much an epistle of love as a riddle to unpick. Reflecting on this song and its composer to Peter Pettinger, the pianist Warren Bernhardt said, "He'd get tied up in the most beastly keys."

YET NE'ER BROKEN

(from His Last Concert In Germany, West Wind 2003)

Another anagram, this time of the name of his cocaine dealer. The number was recorded at his final *Village Vanguard Sessions* in June 1980, but there also versions from his final series of European concerts from that year: some slow, some fast, some tied in knots, impossible to tell whether you're hearing notes of grace or anger.

© Matt Evans, Getty

"I'd already been influenced enormously by Bill's use of space and dynamics," Hall told jazz author Philip Clark in 2013. "Most guys were coming from a macho bop background but Bill seemed to exist in another dimension. He was so perceptive it sometimes felt like he was inside your brain."

With Motian and Israels, Evans threw himself into recording and composing. His confidence had revived but there was also his habit to finance. He signed with the Verve label and in 1963 won his first Grammy, for *Conversations With Myself* in which the pianist overdubbed himself playing solo piano. A shifting line-up of drummers pushed Evans in different directions, often to the detriment of his fluid style. Frustrated, Israels left the group in 1966, replaced by 22-year-old Eddie Gomez. However, it wouldn't be until 1968 that Evans settled on a new trio line-up, recruiting 24-year-old New Yorker Marty Morrell on drums.

Live, they were revered, especially in Europe, but on record found it hard to establish a unified sound while Helen Keane pushed Evans in supposedly commercial directions. "We did a record with [jazz flautist Jeremy Steig] which was difficult because Jeremy was pretty out of it," Morrell told pianist Jan Stevens in 2005. "And then *From Left To Right* [Evans with strings and Fender Rhodes] wasn't the right way to go. It was always my view that Bill should have done more trio albums, maybe adding a horn or two occasionally."

"The 'special projects'…" says Eliot Zigmund, with a sigh. "In my first year playing with him I didn't do any recording because everything was a 'special project'."

The irony was that, when Zigmund joined in 1975, Evans was playing better than he had in years. "He wasn't using," says Zigmund, "he was on methadone but he wasn't getting high. He was really trying. He grew a beard, started wearing these flashy sports jackets. I mean, at heart, Bill was kind of an ordinary middle-class guy from New Jersey who wanted the wife, the kids, the whole bit."

In 1972, while he was still living with Ellaine Schultz, Evans met and fell in love with Nenette Zazzara, a waitress at the Concerts By The Sea nightclub in Redondo Beach, California. The two decided to get married. On being told the news Schultz assured Evans she was fine with the decision. Then, while he was back on the West Coast, she committed suicide by throwing herself under a New York subway train.

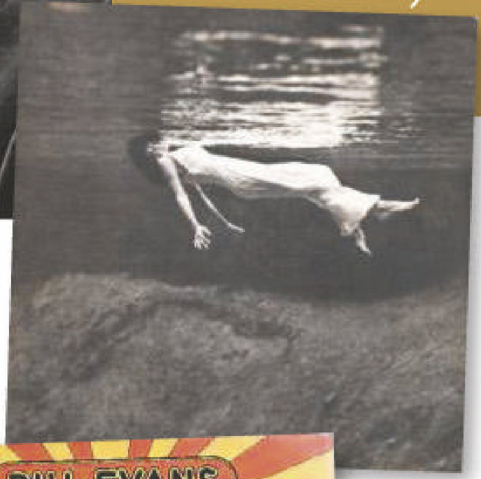
"That was tragic," says Zigmund. "And the Bill I knew was a tragic figure. When I spoke to him I always felt there was part of him holding back a tear."

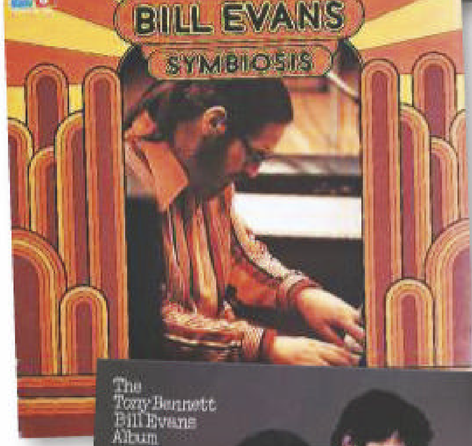
BILL MARRIED NENETTE IN MANHATTAN ON August 5, 1973. Two years later she gave birth to a baby boy, whom the pair christened Evan. Speaking to author Len Lyons, Evans said, "Getting a whole family thing going, buying a home, becoming a father, all of this contributes to my motivation."

You hear that motivation in the next wave of music, from the high-wire complexity of 1974's orchestrally augmented *Symbiosis* to the intimate piano and vocal arrangements of *The Tony Bennett/Bill Evans Album*, and two trio albums recorded in 1977 but released later, *I Will Say Goodbye* and *You Must Believe In Spring*.

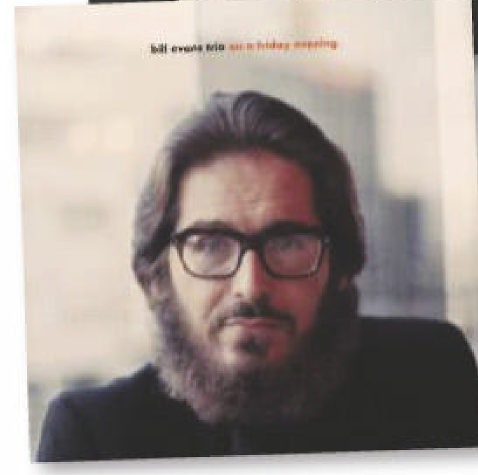
"It was an exceptional trio," says Zigmund. "Prior to that, a little complacency or robotic playing had entered into Bill's style. I think

"BILL WAS A WHITE MIDDLE-CLASS AMERICAN WHO GREW UP IN THE NEW JERSEY SUBURBS. DRUGS GOT HIM AWAY FROM THAT, INTO THE NOIR LIFE." Eliot Zigmund





The
Tony Bennett
Bill Evans
Album



We will meet again: (this page, from left) Eddie Gomez, Eliot Zigmund and Evans, mid '70s; (opposite) Bill with his niece, inspiration for Waltz For Debby; (insets) LPs with Jim Hall, the Claus Ogerman Orchestra, Tony Bennett, a 1975 live set with the above trio, out in 2021.

[Eddie Gomez and I] brought a freshness, shook things up. Eddie made me comfortable right from the beginning and I tried to get under Bill's skin in a way, so he could move beyond his own natural boundaries. He'd got a little set in his ways. I felt it was my job to upset that."

A recently unearthed 1975 live recording, *On A Friday Evening*, captured at Oil Can Harry's in Vancouver and now available on the Craft Recordings label, captures some of that freshness and questing, as well as a deep sense of melancholy.

"It's sad, it's fleeting, it's minor," says Zigmund. "There's something in Bill's playing around that time that reminds me of a person sobbing, you know?"

Sadly, there was more heartache to come. In 1979, following a long bout of depression, Bill's beloved brother Harry shot himself. "Harry's suicide affected him tremendously," says Joe LaBarbera – who replaced Zigmund as Evans's drummer that same year. "In fact, that was the real turning point. It marked a noticeable change in his will to live. And from there on it was all downhill, frankly."

The music Evans made with that final trio, of Marc Johnson on bass and LaBarbera on drums has a valedictory quality. Albums such as *The Paris Concert* (released in 1983) and *Live In Buenos Aires 1979* (released 1990) possess a melodic sadness coupled with a percussive urgency, as if Evans knows time is running out. "He was getting inside the instrument more," says LaBarbera. "Being more aggressive, really striving again, drawing more and more on his technique."

He was also back on drugs.

"He got addicted to cocaine," says LaBarbera. "At that point you could buy it anywhere in Greenwich Village but Bill loved going to the most hazardous places to buy drugs. I think the whole dark romance of it was as important as the actual high. He'd tell me stories of going into Harlem with a with a fake police badge so if he got caught buying heroin, he could claim he was a cop."

THE PHYSICAL DECLINE WAS OBVIOUS TO FRIENDS who'd known him for years, but Evans remained strong at the piano right up until the end.

"He was living for the music," insists LaBarbera. "He was getting weaker and weaker but he'd always conserve his energy for the gig."

A close bond was growing between the trio, and LaBarbera noticed that Evans was taking a renewed interest in his own playing, listening back to tapes and telling interviewers that his current rhythm section were as good as Motian and LaFaro. Which made it increasingly hard for Johnson and LaBarbera to watch their friend steadily kill himself.

"There was great concern," says LaBarbera. "I did not hesitate to talk to him about it. But he'd shoot me down, 'It's not your place. This is not why you're here.'"

They were there to facilitate the music of Evans's final days, as he pushed his body and his talents to their limits. Listen to the final Village Vanguard sessions, recorded in June 1980, and you hear what LaBarbera calls "a danger": a tightrope walk between genius and collapse.

"Right up to the end he could still keep you on your toes," says LaBarbera. "He'd do something where he would just ride on the foundation that Mark and I were playing and be suspended above that rhythmically. Like, you know, he's up in the air and… there were nights at the Vanguard where I'd be looking over at him playing and forget to play. He was that good."

Bill Evans's final performance came at Manhattan jazz club Fat Tuesday's on September 10, 1980. "He'd played two nights," says LaBarbera. "Then he couldn't play anymore. So he went home and rested. [His then girlfriend] Laurie [Verchomin] and I were working on him to go to the hospital. He finally relented on Sunday night, so Monday morning we drove him into New York."

Stops were made along the way, first at Rockefeller University where Evans had been a part of a methadone programme. "That was tough. His doctor didn't want him back in the programme because he had messed up so many times. Then we stopped at his manager's apartment but he didn't get out the car. Then as we were driving away from Helen's apartment, he became violently ill."

Evans had started haemorrhaging from the mouth and complaining he was drowning. LaBarbera raced the car to Mount Sinai Hospital. "I asked Laurie to go on ahead and alert them and I kind of half-carried, half-walked Bill into an examination room, sat him down on the table and… He was in no state to communicate but we looked each other squarely in the eyes and I realised, Man, this could be it. That's the last time I saw him."

Bill Evans died on September 15, 1980, from a haemorrhaging ulcer, bronchial pneumonia, liver damage and malnutrition; and from a lifetime of being Bill Evans.

"I wasn't in touch those last six months," says Eliot Zigmund. "And when he passed away, I cried like a baby. I cried more for his death than I did for either of my parents. You know what I'd like to do? I'd like to go back. I'd like to go back and tell him how much he meant to me, stuff I wasn't able to express verbally at the time. Who knows. Maybe it got through. Maybe it got through in the music."

With thanks to Philip Clark for use of his Jim Hall interview. Everybody Still Digs Bill Evans: A Career Retrospective (1956-1980) and On A Friday Evening are out now on Craft Recordings/Concord.

PROVE IT ALL NIGHT

On-stage, for at least five decades, BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN has known few peers. And looking up at him since 1974 has been photographer JANET MACOSKA, tracing his transformation from grease monkey to megastar. "He's the preacher," she tells DANNY ECCLESTON, "and there's always that revival energy."

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN AND CLEVELAND, Ohio: a match made in smoke-belching heaven. "It's a factory town," notes photographer Janet Macoska, Ohio born and bred. "It has that mentality. The people are uninhibited. Rock'n'roll just fit in."

Weaned on radio pioneers from R&B evangelist Alan Freed onwards, it was the town that ate and drank rock. "Radio would play bands that weren't playing any place else in America," says Macoska. "That's where I heard of the Sensational Alex Harvey Band. David Bowie's first US concert was in Cleveland. And Bruce Springsteen, when he finally got out of New Jersey, was totally adopted by Cleveland. He was one of us."

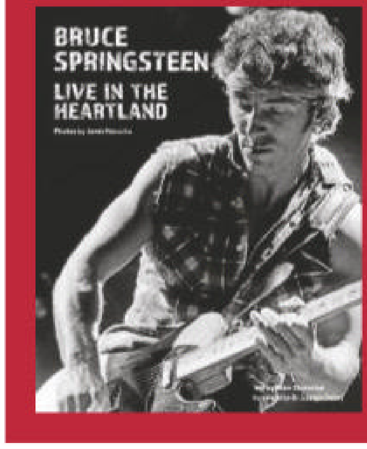
Macoska has tracked the evolution of that affair since February 1974, when she was dispatched to shoot a Wishbone Ash gig at Cleveland's Allen Theatre but used most of her film on the opening act.

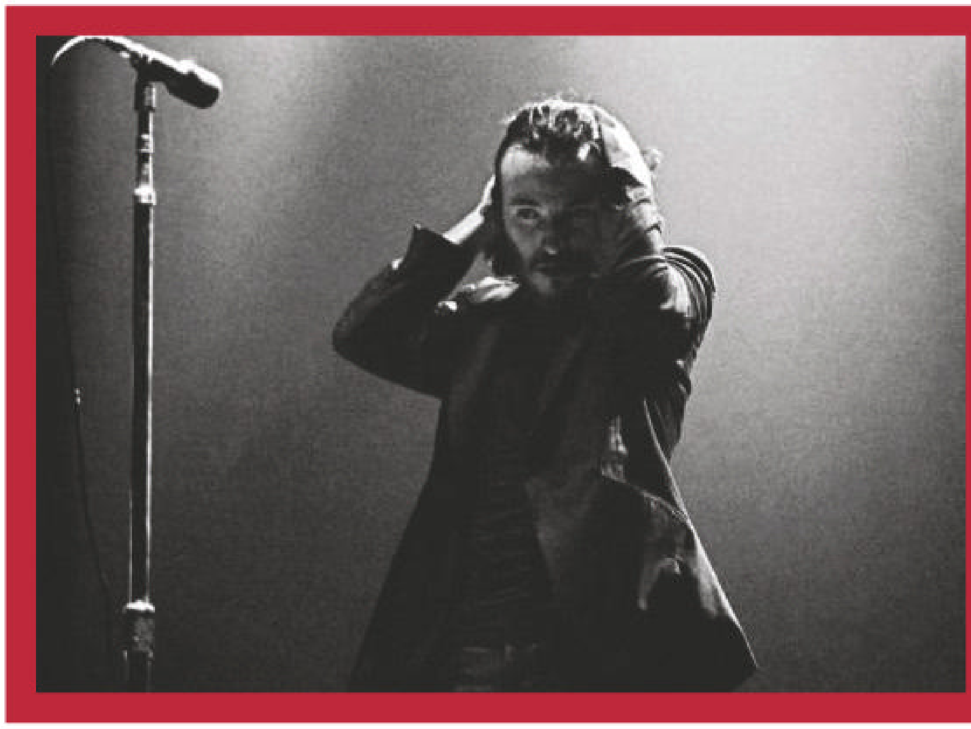
"I went because I liked this new-fangled duelling guitar thing happening with Wishbone Ash," she says. "But Bruce comes on, he's captivating from the very beginning. He's got energy and charisma and I have no idea of who he really is."

Her next Springsteen assignment brought her back to the Allen Theatre in April '76, but the difference in the now-headlining act, with *Born To Run* and thousands of road miles behind him, could not have been more marked.

"Even in the pictures you can see how he's fitting into his own persona and his own body and his own voice," says Macoska. "You remember how people would call him the next Dylan because of the way he wrote his songs? He was never the next Dylan. He had way too much personality and force. He's the preacher. There's always that revival energy."

Macoska's Springsteen pictures, spanning five decades and many previously unpublished, are compiled in a new book, Live In The Heartland, a paean to the relentless energy but also the dynamics and poetry of Springsteen live. In fact, ➢

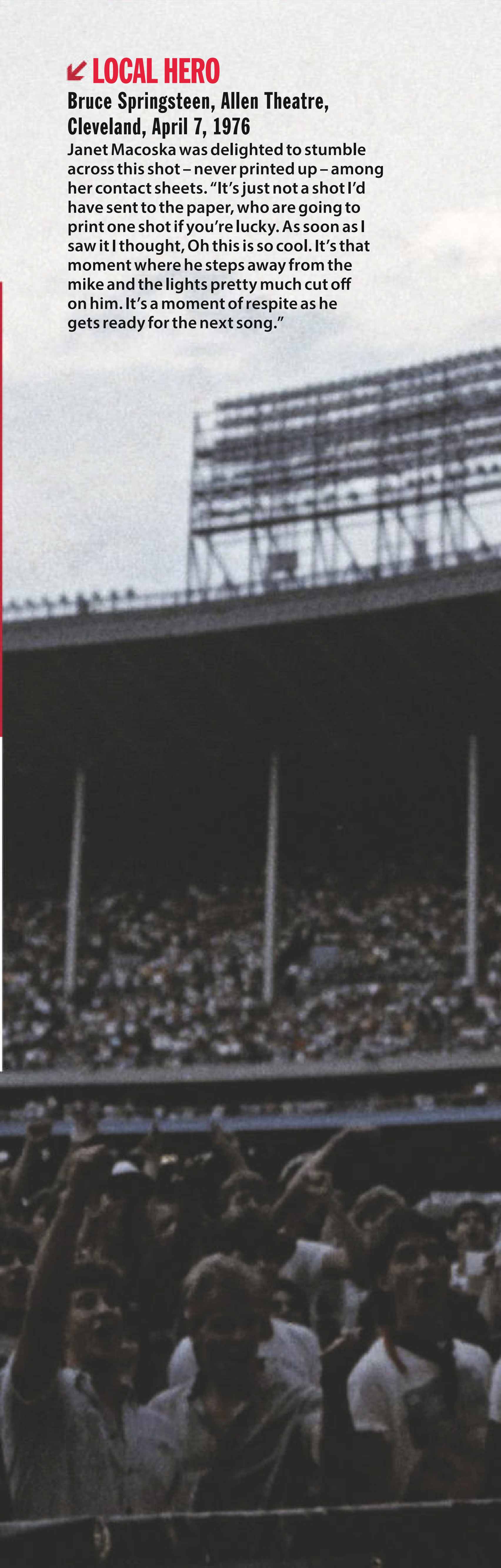




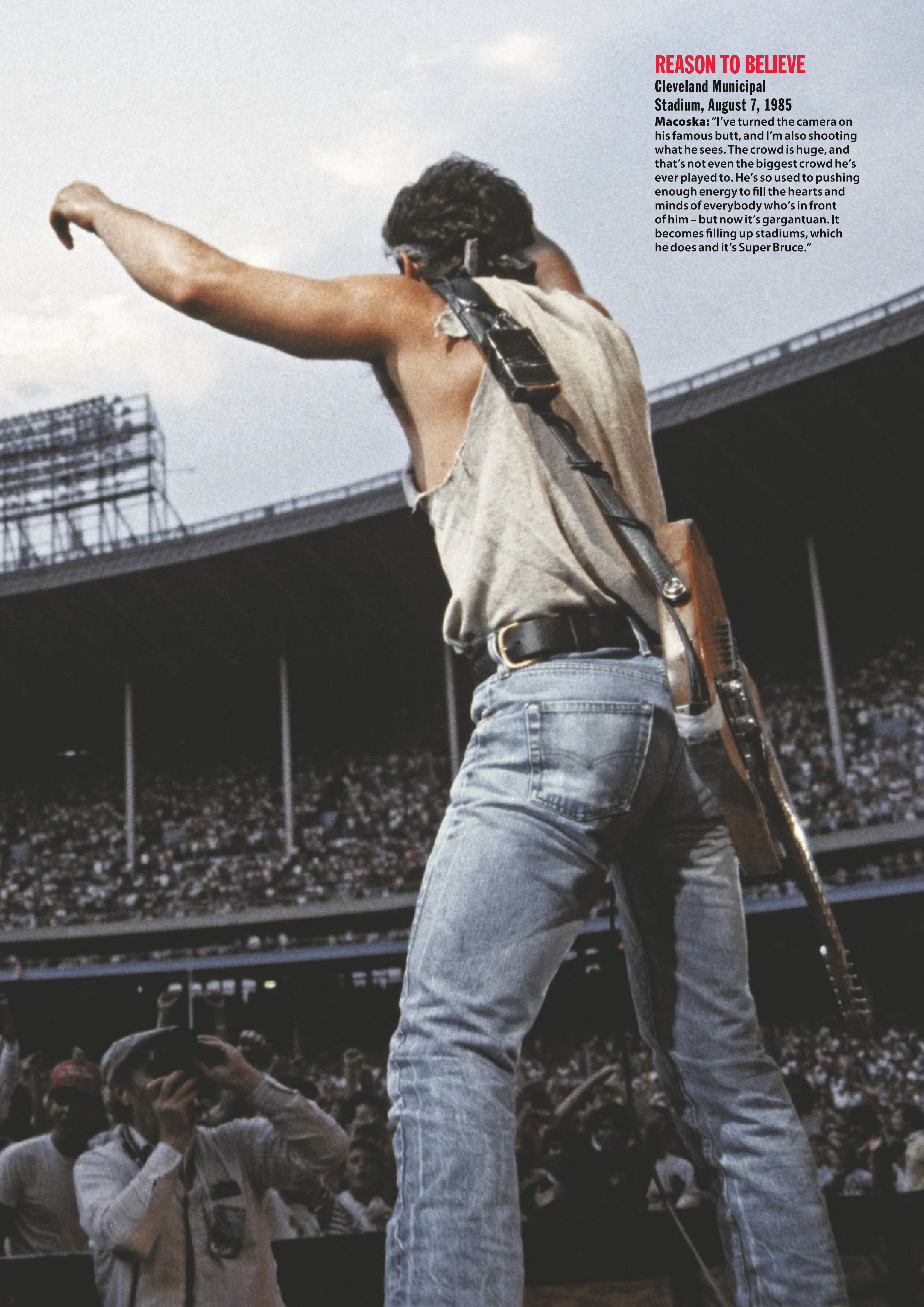
↙ LOCAL HERO

Bruce Springsteen, Allen Theatre, Cleveland, April 7, 1976

Janet Macoska was delighted to stumble across this shot – never printed up – among her contact sheets. "It's just not a shot I'd have sent to the paper, who are going to print one shot if you're lucky. As soon as I saw it I thought, Oh this is so cool. It's that moment where he steps away from the mike and the lights pretty much cut off on him. It's a moment of respite as he gets ready for the next song."



Janet Macoska (3)



REASON TO BELIEVE

Cleveland Municipal Stadium, August 7, 1985

Macoska: "I've turned the camera on his famous butt, and I'm also shooting what he sees. The crowd is huge, and that's not even the biggest crowd he's ever played to. He's so used to pushing enough energy to fill the hearts and minds of everybody who's in front of him – but now it's gargantuan. It becomes filling up stadiums, which he does and it's Super Bruce."

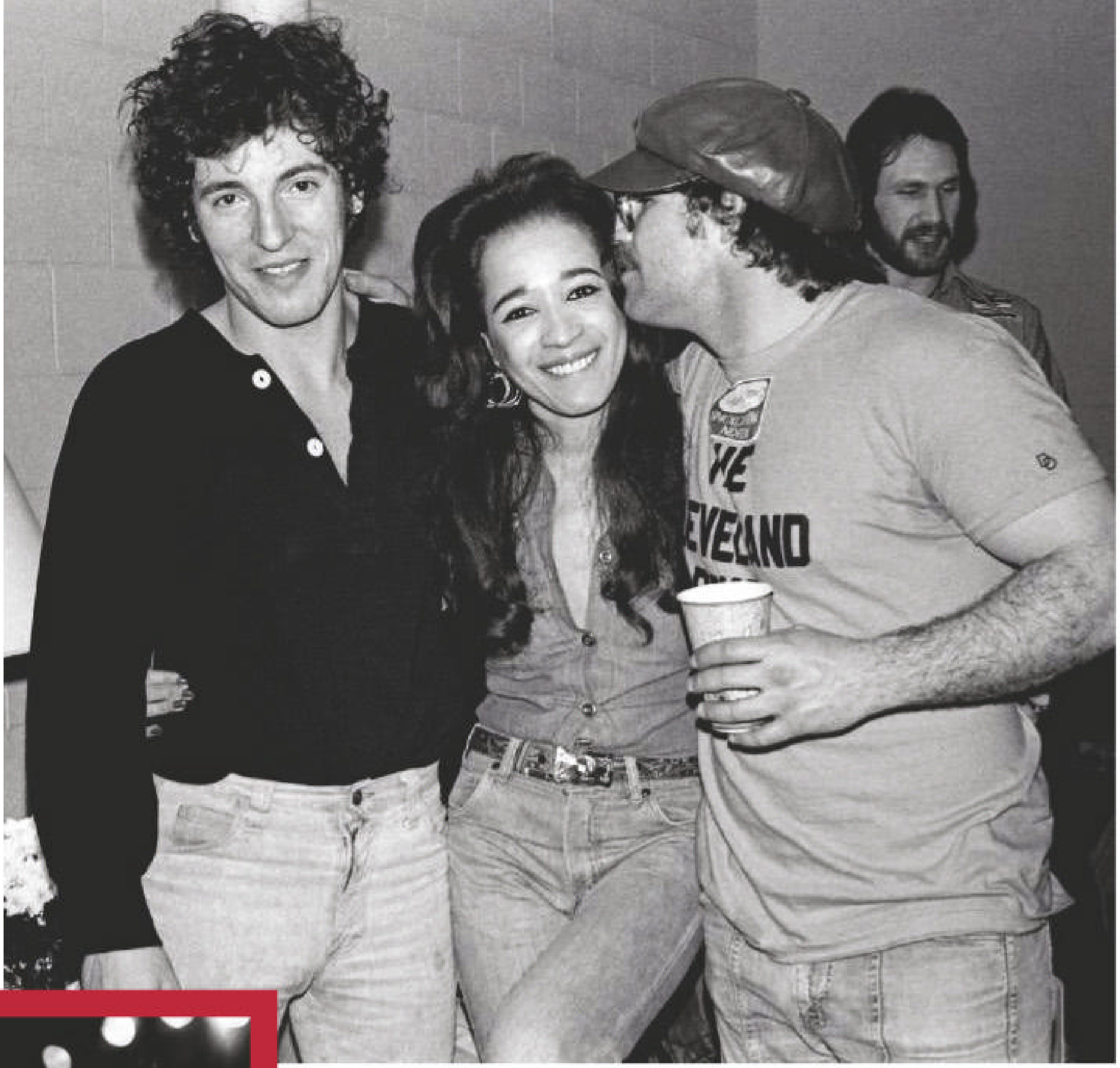
< Macoska's only off-stage shots are of the Boss fraternising with Ronnie Spector, who'd joined the E Street Band on-stage in February '77 during their epic Lawsuit tour. Springsteen looks tired, even a bit shy.

"He's very elusive," Macoska reckons. "The times that I was backstage, you wouldn't see Bruce. I knew a muscle therapist that he had on the road. He'd have, like, three-hour massages. And he had a trainer and a nutritionist. It was like a fighter who is in training every day and every night to maintain the Bruce that you see on-stage."

But it's the passion and joy he channels – and work, of course – that's kept Macoska coming back.

"He's out there every night, pushing all that at the audience. And they just fuel the fire. Everything he gets back from them just makes him hotter and greater and more exuberant. He really doesn't hold anything back."

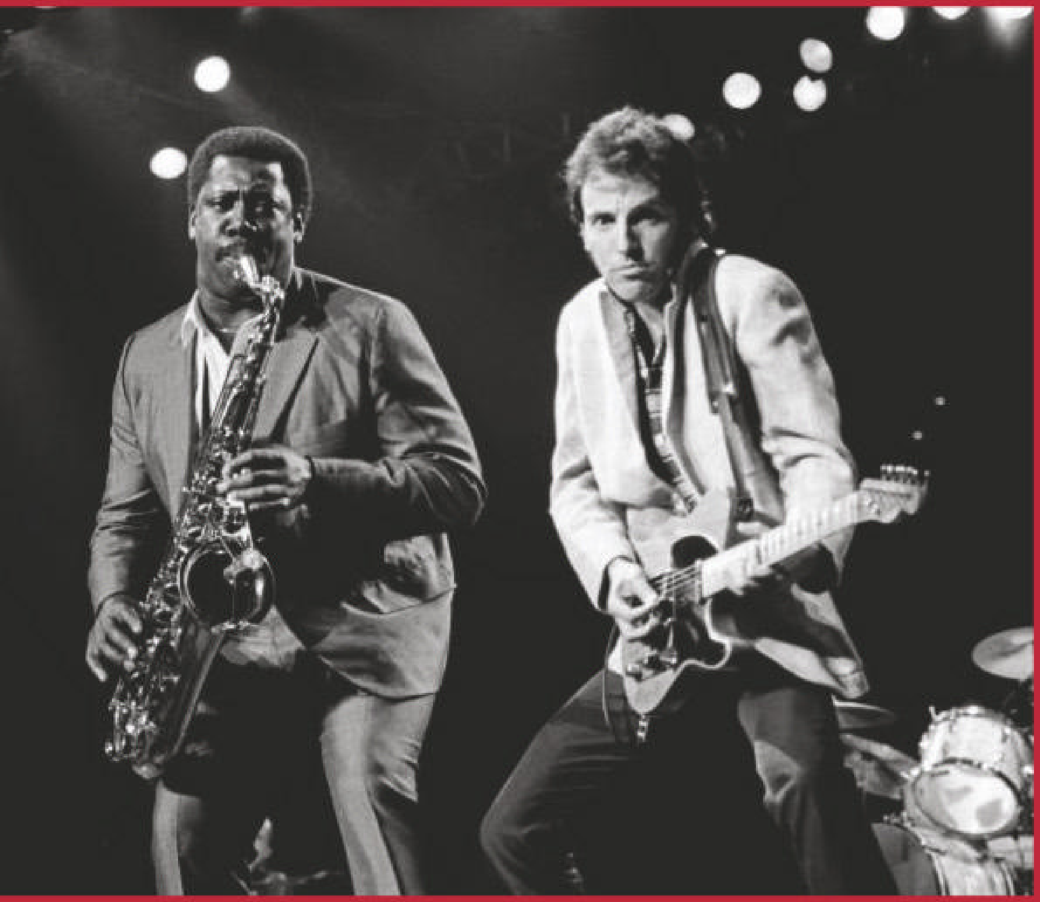
Bruce Springsteen: Live In The Heartland by Janet Macoska is published by ACC Art Books.



↑ WE TAKE CARE OF OUR OWN

With Ronnie Spector, Richfield Coliseum, February 17, 1977

Wall of Sound aficionado Springsteen pays tribute to the woman so often in its shadow. Macoska: "I'm not sure if she had just gotten out of Phil Spector's grip, but there was a real sense of Bruce and the boys looking out for her. Stevie [Van Zandt] had produced this Billy Joel song for her – Say Goodbye To Hollywood – which came out on Cleveland International records. And they gave her four songs at this Bruce show, and debuted the single."



↑ THE E STREET SHUFFLE

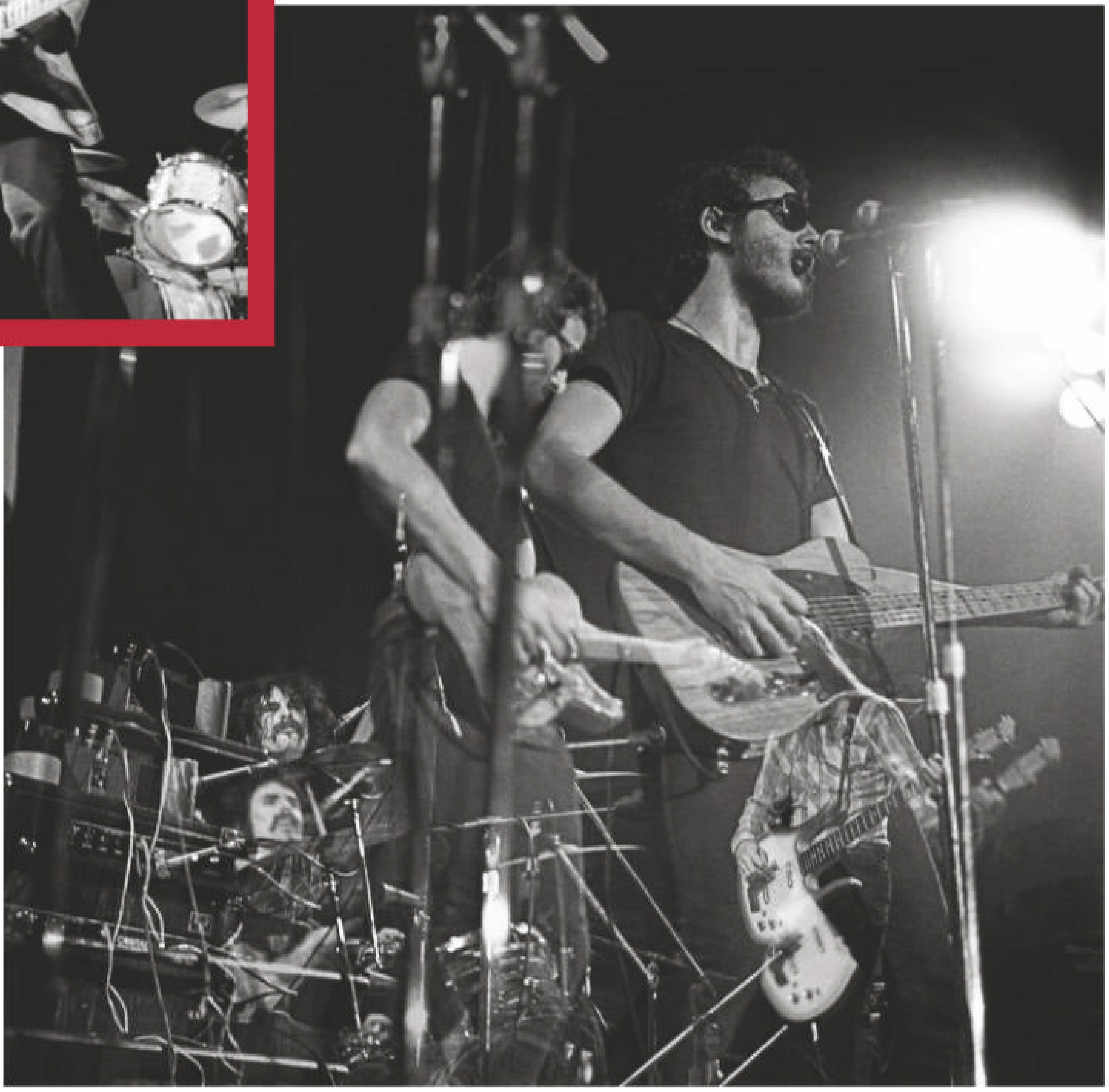
With Clarence Clemons, Richfield Coliseum, Richfield OH, October 7, 1980

Macoska: "The Big Man! There's definitely an ebb and flow the audience comes to expect in these three-hour Bruce Springsteen marathons, and they know he has certain bits that he does. Like in 1980, a song like Cadillac Ranch would be a showcase for all these little routines with Clarence. The audience knows that… they wait for that."

→ TWO FACES

Allen Theatre, Cleveland, February 1, 1974

Macoska: "I had 12 images on a roll of film for that night. I ended up using six or seven on Bruce; poor old Wishbone Ash got the rest. It wasn't my intention, but I had to do it, because he was all that and more. It's the first time he came to Cleveland and the first live show I ever shot. There's a way to kick off a book!"



Janet Macoska (7)

→ GLORY DAYS

With Clarence Clemons and Nils Lofgren, Richfield Coliseum, July 8, 1984

Macoska: "This is just one of my favourite shots, because it is exactly what a band should feel and be like. It's that tight unit. They don't even have to talk to each other, they just have to look at each other in a certain way and know what the others are doing. I could put that on the wall and look at it every day for the rest of my life and it would make me happy."

↘ SHE'S THE ONE

With Patti Scialfa, Cleveland Municipal Stadium, August 7, 1985

Springsteen married Julianne Phillips in May 1985, but that didn't staunch rumours about Bruce and the sole female E Streeter and by 1989 they were officially an item. "It was obvious that Bruce and Patti had incredible chemistry," says Macoska. "I didn't see it as the same kind of stagecraft Bruce used in his routines with The Big Man. Married or not, they seemed very attracted to each other."

↓ SPIRIT IN THE NIGHT

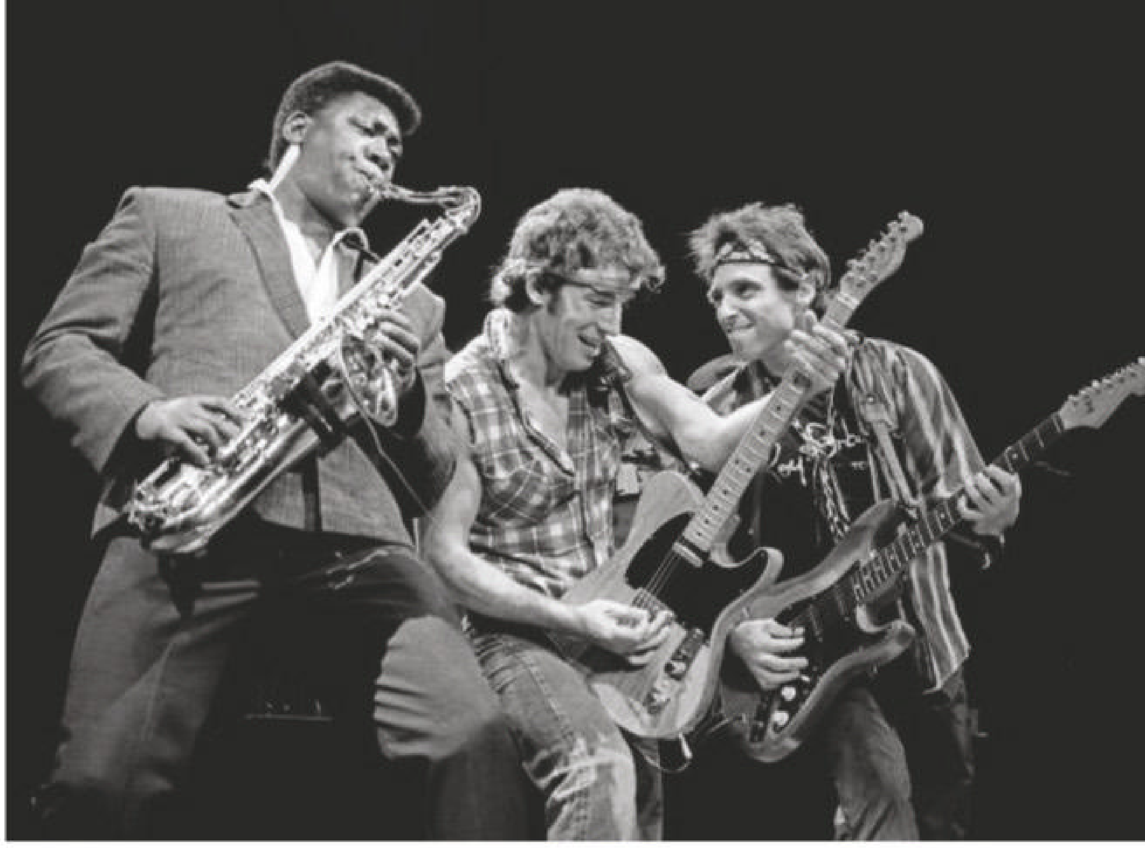
Mourning Clarence Clemons, Quicken Loans Arena, Cleveland 2016

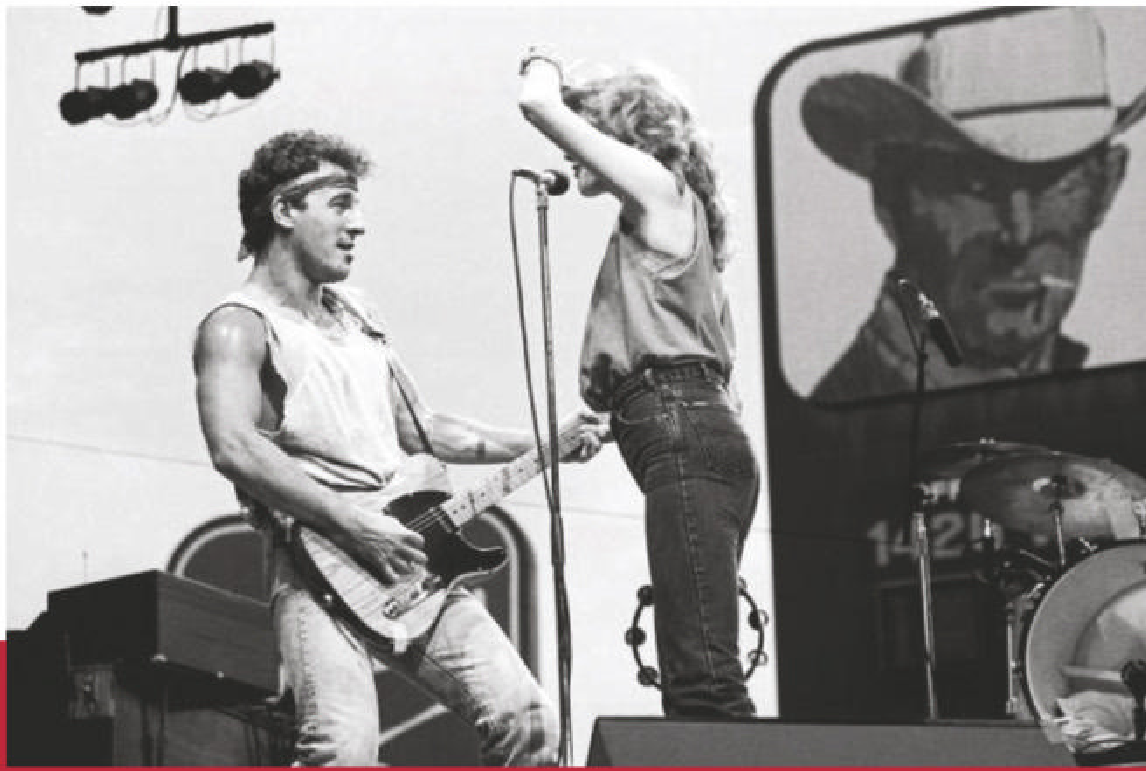
Macoska: "It's like we'd come full circle. Clarence had died [in 2011], so the dynamics were going to change. I wanted to see if the family unit, with Clarence's nephew Jake on saxophone, would be affected. There were plenty of those signs – a call out from the audience about their love for the Big Man. But Jake is embraced as if he's one of the old guys. So, the family unit survives."

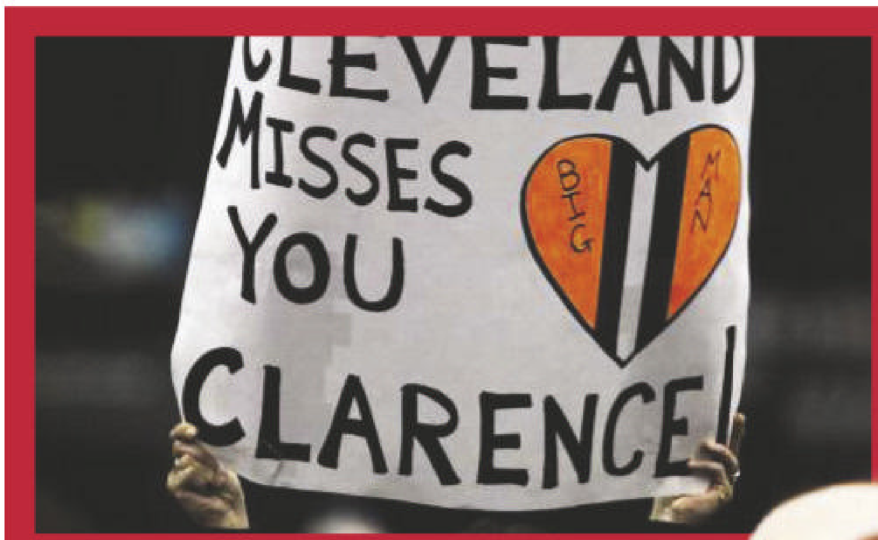
↘ INTO THE FIRE

At Allen Theatre, Cleveland, April 7, 1976

Macoska: "The second time I shot him, they'd made *Born To Run*. Bruce is still a scrawny little guy but they're road-hardened. They're a unit and they're powerful and he's the leader. It's just more powerful, because he's got the tunes and people all over the country have discovered him and are writing about him and he's just much… *more*. It's the Spinal Tap turning to 11."







SMELLS LIKE VICTORY

In 1991, **NIRVANA** changed popular music with an album that defined a generation and turned its creators into a "monstrous freakout". Thirty years on, *Nevermind* looms larger, and sounds more powerful than ever. "It's a great record and it connects with so many people," discovers **DORIAN LYNSKEY**. "But it's bittersweet..." Photography: **KIRK WEDDLE**.

Kirk Weddle, courtesy of ACC Art Books www.accartbooks.com/

IN APRIL 1988, KURT COBAIN, Krist Novoselic and drummer Dave Foster showed up at the Central Tavern on the west side of Seattle to play Nirvana's first ever concert in the city they would come to define, only to discover that the audience numbered two: Sub Pop co-founders Jonathan Poneman and Bruce Pavitt. "We got a case of beer and sat under the bridge and commiserated," Novoselic says today.

On April 17, 1991, three years and four drummers later, Novoselic was in the OK Hotel, just around the corner from the Central Tavern, playing to a "mass of pulsing bodies – just reckless abandon". Nirvana's fee would pay for them to drive down to Los Angeles, where they were going to sign a $287,000 contract with DGC Records and record their second album with producer Butch Vig. Towards the end of the set, Cobain stepped up to the microphone to introduce a brand-new song: "This one's called Smells Like Teen Spirit." Some joker in the crowd responded with "Freebird!" Poneman was there, too. "If I had never heard that song again, I would have remembered it for the rest of my life," he says. "I don't think *Nevermind* would have been *Nevermind* without Smells Like Teen Spirit."

Six months later, the song was in heavy rotation on MTV and radio, propelling its parent album far beyond the level of success anybody ➢

Diving for pearls: Nirvana recreate the *Nevermind* sleeve, Los Angeles, October 28, 1991 (from left) Krist Novoselic, Dave Grohl, Kurt Cobain.

⋞ involved could have predicted. While the three years between the Central Tavern and the OK Hotel had been a gratifying and manageable ascent, the change wrought by *Nevermind* was so rapid that, as Dave Grohl told MOJO in 2013, "We went from being this happy little bundle of love to being this monstrous freakout."

"I look back at between 1991 and 1994 and it seems like 10 years," Novoselic reflects. "So many things happened. There's a lot to be proud of. It's a great record and it connects with so many people. But it's bittersweet. It was such a compressed, tense time." He laughs ruefully. "Nobody expects the Spanish Inquisition."

IT IS A MATTER OF HISTORICAL RECORD THAT *NEVERMIND* not only shattered the ceiling for alternative rock but brought about a sea-change in popular culture at large. That doesn't happen without a confluence of factors, but what it ultimately came down to, and what makes the album such an eternal delight, is the extraordinary songs that Nirvana were writing in the two years following the release of their debut album, *Bleach*, on Sub Pop in June 1989.

Cobain, Novoselic and Foster's replacement Chad Channing were already playing a couple of potent new songs in 1989 – the hard-charging Immodium (AKA Breed) and the eerie Polly – but Novoselic identifies In Bloom as the first real breakthrough. In rehearsal at the Dutchman in Seattle in March 1990, it sounded like Bad Brains, but then he got a call from Cobain. "He was really excited: 'Check this out, I just tweaked the song.' He played it over the phone to me and there's this big chorus all of a sudden."

In Bloom and Lithium were clearly major advances but when Poneman told Butch Vig that Nirvana could be "bigger than The Beatles", it seemed a tad excessive. "I thought he was full of bullshit because it's a preposterous claim," says Vig today. "I wasn't being ironic," insists Poneman.

A decade older than the band, the amiable Vig had made his bones producing the post-hardcore band Killdozer in his hometown of Madison, Wisconsin and impressed Sub Pop with his work on albums by Tad and The Fluid. He was inventive, credible, affable and, importantly, cheap.

Poneman arranged for Nirvana to spend a week at Vig's Smart studio in Madison in April 1990. "I could immediately tell that [Cobain's] writing was evolving," says Vig. "The melodies he was juxtaposing over the chord changes were a lot more interesting than *Bleach*." He also knew how to improve them. "There was a bridge in In Bloom and Butch said, 'We don't really need this,'" Novoselic remembers. "He took out his razor blade and cut that section out of the tape and threw it in the bin."

Vig had to learn fast how to navigate Cobain's mercurial moods. He remembers animated conversations about The Beatles, Pixies and even Leonard Bernstein, but also periods of awkward silence. "On the first day we started setting up and Kurt went and sat down in the corner. Krist pulled me aside and said, 'He gets in these moods. You just gotta leave him alone and he'll snap out of it.' Maybe an hour and a half later Kurt got his guitar and said, 'Let's go.'"

Vig also realised that he should record even warm-ups because Cobain, temperamentally incapable of holding back, would blow out his voice after four takes at the most. On the Friday night, Vig saw them play an "unhinged" show in a pizza parlour in Madison, after which the singer's voice was shot and the session was over. The eight songs in the bag included In Bloom, Lithium, Polly, Breed and an early version of Stay Away called Pay To Play, which included the prescient line, "I don't know why I never mind."

Vig believed that Nirvana would soon return to Smart to finish the album but they didn't yet have enough songs and there was a critical faultline within the band. Channing was a creative drummer but Cobain wanted someone tighter and harder at the foundation of Nirvana's sound. After the *Bleach* tour ended in May, Cobain and Novoselic drove to Channing's house to tell him he was out. To their relief, he didn't argue.

Meet yr idols: Nirvana with Sonic Youth, Seattle Center Coliseum, April 11, 1991 (from left) Lee Ranaldo, Kim Gordon, Steve Shelley, Novoselic, Cobain, Grohl; (above) Kurt takes the plunge, Vancouver Commodore Ballroom, March 8, '91.

"It was really just musical differences," Channing says today. "I've been a songwriter all my life. I've never considered myself to be just a drummer. Back when we were writing *Bleach*, Kurt had said it would be cool if I could contribute more. In the end, that was never going to happen. It was always going to be what Kurt wanted to do."

Only a decade later did Channing learn that he appeared on *Nevermind*, albeit uncredited and almost inaudible, because the band retained the Smart version of Polly. "I hit the bell on the ride cymbal about four times and that was it," he shrugs.

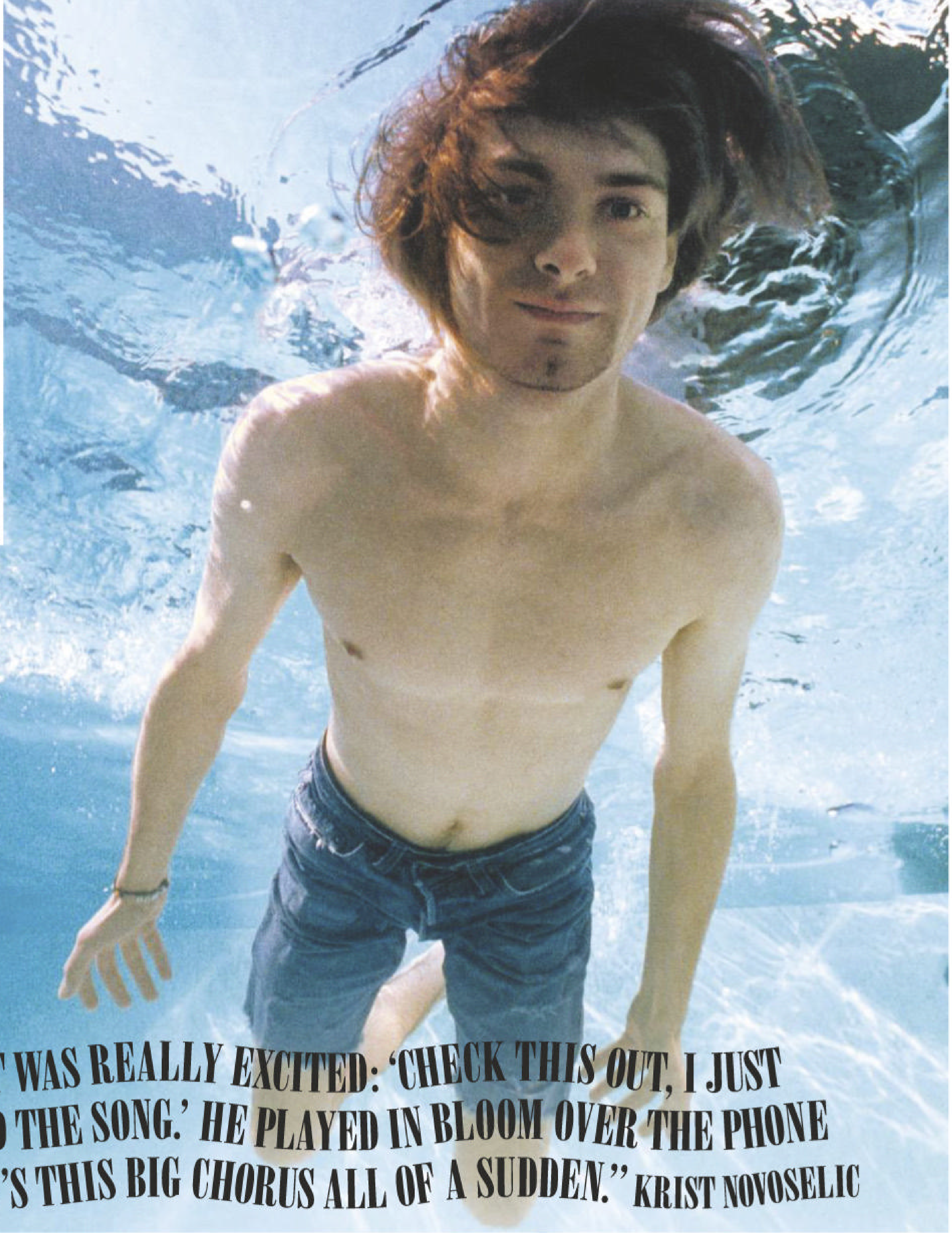
NIRVANA DIDN'T HAVE A REPLACEMENT LINED UP SO they borrowed their friend Dale Crover from the Melvins for a few dates supporting Sonic Youth before recruiting Mudhoney's Dan Peters to record a wildly catchy new song with *Bleach* producer Jack Endino. Backed with Dive from the Smart sessions, Sliver was to be their last release for a label they had outgrown.

"Kurt told me that I should be able to sell millions of copies of *Bleach*," says Poneman, "which at the time was crazy. Indie bands sold nowhere near the quantities that Kurt emphatically said we should be able to sell. We were financially on the ropes all the time."

Cobain and Novoselic turned to Soundgarden's manager Susan Silver for advice. "We weren't very astute at business," says Novoselic. "We said, 'What do we do?' And she said, 'You should go to LA and speak to people.'"

In August, Nirvana met with lawyers and managers in Los

Kirk Weddle, courtesy of ACC Art Books www.accartbooks.com/; Charles Peterson (2)



"KURT WAS REALLY EXCITED: 'CHECK THIS OUT, I JUST TWEAKED THE SONG.' HE PLAYED IN BLOOM OVER THE PHONE AND THERE'S THIS BIG CHORUS ALL OF A SUDDEN." KRIST NOVOSELIC

Angeles, using a cassette of the Smart demos as a calling card. On the way home, they dropped in on Crover and his Melvins bandmate Buzz Osborne in San Francisco and they all went to see the Washington DC hardcore punk band Scream, whose powerhouse drummer was 22-year-old Dave Grohl. "We were like, What a great drummer!," Novoselic remembers. "If only, if only…"

A little while later, Scream abruptly splintered and Grohl, stranded in North Hollywood, called Osborne, who hooked him up with Novoselic. Within weeks, he was playing with Nirvana. "Dave was a breath of fresh air," says Craig Montgomery, the band's front-of-house sound engineer. "He was young, enthusiastic, and he could sing. It was a real kick in the ass to the band."

After just two shows, the new Nirvana line-up was touring the UK with L7 in October. "They were already on fire," says L7's frontwoman Donita Sparks. "Dave Grohl told me, 'Better get your free Nirvana shirt because they sell out every night.' They were being courted by every major label. We were lucky that they would invite us along to dinner when the suits were paying but I could sense fatigue in Kurt. All of a sudden you've got to be the host of a fucking party every night and that wasn't in his nature."

Back home, Grohl moved into Cobain's grotty apartment on Pear Street, Olympia, where he slept on the couch beside a tank of ailing turtles. That same November, Nirvana signed with Gold Mountain Management and entered serious negotiations with Gary Gersh at Geffen subsidiary DGC. "The biggest factor was we had signed Sonic Youth and they were happy," says Mark Kates, who was DGC's head of alternative promotion. "Kim [Gordon] literally said to me in June of '89, 'The next band you should sign is Nirvana.'"

After a patchy demo session with Montgomery on New Year's Day 1991, Nirvana spent the first three months of the year working on new songs in a converted barn in Tacoma, Washington. Each day, they would jam for hours, building songs from Cobain's riffs. Novoselic remembers him playing the chorus to Smells Like Teen Spirit over and over again. "Dave and I started saying, 'Hey, let's slow this down,' so that turned into the verse and we had that loud-soft dynamic. I remember doing some goofy bass line on On A Plain ➢

GRUNGE MATCH

1991: the US rock mainstream vs its insurgents.

R.E.M.

Out Of Time

(Warner Bros, March 12)

The ascent of former alt-favourites to mainstream cosiness created a vacuum a new wave of gnarlier bands would fill. By May '91, thanks to Losing My Religion, they were omnipresent. *DE*

US CHART PEAK: 1

SMASHING PUMPKINS

Gish *(Caroline/Hut, May 17)*

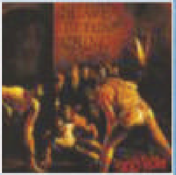
The Pumpkins' debut melded metal to a gothier, sensitive pop, inspired by The Cure, Banshees etc. Recording was intense, but Butch Vig's gilt (co-)production set a template that would fill stadiums. *JB*

US CHART PEAK: 195

SKID ROW

Slave To The Grind

(Atlantic, June 11)



Singer Seb Bach's 'AIDS Kills Faggots Dead' T-shirt epitomised the hard rock culture Nirvana anathemised. Blues and punk roots show in the Guns N'Roses-indebted mix, but a Number 1 album? Really? *DE*

US CHART PEAK: 1

VAN HALEN

For Unlawful Carnal Knowledge

(Warner Bros, June 17)

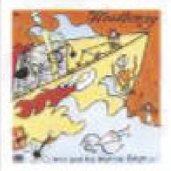
Van Halen's third album with Sammy Hagar restored producer Ted Templeman and an axe-centric swagger missing from synthy *OU812*. Weathering the grunge storm, their next album, 1995's *Balance*, would be just as big. *DE*

US CHART PEAK: 1

MUDHONEY

Every Good Boy Deserves Fudge

(Sub Pop, July 26)



Sub Pop's biggest-selling LP to that point, *EGBDF* debuted higher in the UK than *Nevermind*, while largely forsaking the 'grunge' genre Mudhoney had pioneered. Instead, this was free-wheeling, garage rock cut on 8-track. *JB*

US CHART PEAK: N/A (UK: 34)

METALLICA

Metallica

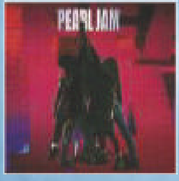
(Elektra/Vertigo, August 12)

Metallica staged their own stylistic vanity bonfire by forswearing thrash, hiring Bob Rock, and forging a more straightforward brand of heavy. Enter Sandman blanketed MTV as much as Teen Spirit. *KC*

US CHART PEAK: 1

PEARL JAM

Ten *(Epic, August 27)*



Their awkward DNA – Seattle grunge progenitors Green River; a SoCal Chili Peppers fan – yielded this debut's potently relatable hard rock angst. Pearl Jam soon dissented from *Ten*'s gloss but its anthems endure. *KC*

US CHART PEAK: 2

GUNS N'ROSES

Use Your Illusion I & II

(Geffen, September 17)

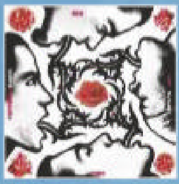
After their 30 million-selling debut, GN'R had free rein: to release two albums on the same day, get political (Civil War), explore stylistic shifts (overblown piano ballad November Rain) and covers (Wings, Dylan). *JB*

US CHART PEAK: 2 & 1

RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS

Blood Sugar Sex Magik

(Warner Bros, September 24)



Producer Rick Rubin ushered in RHCP's new direction – a combination of slap-bass and testosterone, funk basted in the suntan oil of Californian rock that lined up nicely with oncoming bro' culture. *JB*

US CHART PEAK: 3

SOUNDGARDEN

Badmotorfinger

(A&M, September 24)

If *Nevermind* spoke to vulnerable outcasts from hair metal, *Badmotorfinger* gave them an idealised self-image: tops-off, proudly stomping the line from Black Sabbath to grunge. *JB*

US CHART PEAK: 39

and Kurt and Dave shooting me a dirty look. That usually didn't happen. Pretty much the way you hear them on the record is the way we put them together." He remembers the period fondly. "It was a very happy time before *Nevermind*. I feel like we were free."

Gary Gersh persuaded the band to consider some producers with major-label credentials. "Geffen didn't know who I was," Vig says equably. While he was producing Smashing Pumpkins' *Gish* at Smart, Novoselic kept him posted about their meetings with David Briggs, Don Dixon and Scott Litt. At one point, the plan was for Vig to engineer for another producer but, with just days to go, Novoselic called to tell him he'd got the gig and sent over a tape of eight rough-as-hell songs that they'd recorded in the barn on a boombox. "The first thing Kurt said on the tape," Vig recalls, "was, 'Hey Butch, we're going to play you some of our new songs. We've got the world's greatest drummer. His name is Dave.' And then it clicked into Teen Spirit. Even though it was distorted and super lo-fi, I could tell that the songs were hooky."

Around that time, Cobain told Hollywood Rocks magazine that Nirvana were planning to call their next album Sheep. "That was Kurt being iconoclastic," Novoselic laughs. "It was an expression of feeling alienated: 'I don't get what's going on in this world.'"

SOUND CITY WAS A PAST-ITS-PRIME STUDIO IN VAN Nuys, Los Angeles which had previously hosted Neil Young, Fleetwood Mac and, bizarrely, Charles Manson. A short drive away was a corporate apartment complex called Oakwood – or "Cokewood", as Nirvana nicknamed it on account of all the aspiring actors who stayed there. From their apartment they could see the lion-haired members of Swedish rock band Europe hanging out at the swimming pool.

"They were all good-looking, skinny guys with long blonde hair and they had really hot girlfriends walking around and Nirvana would make fun of them," says Vig. "Little did Europe know that *Nevermind* was going to deliver the nail in the coffin of hair-metal."

"The dominant bands were Aerosmith reinvented," says Novoselic. "These soft bands with this macho swagger. Then we were this hard band with feminine sensibilities."

After a few days of rehearsals at 3rd Encore in North Hollywood, Nirvana began work in Sound City's Studio A on May 2 with an initial budget of $65,000: more than 100 times that of *Bleach*. "We had this work ethic we learnt from the Melvins," says Novoselic. After hours, however, was a different matter. "We would have these wild nights in our apartment or we'd hang out on the beach at night. We'd been in the studio with no windows all day so we wanted to get out."

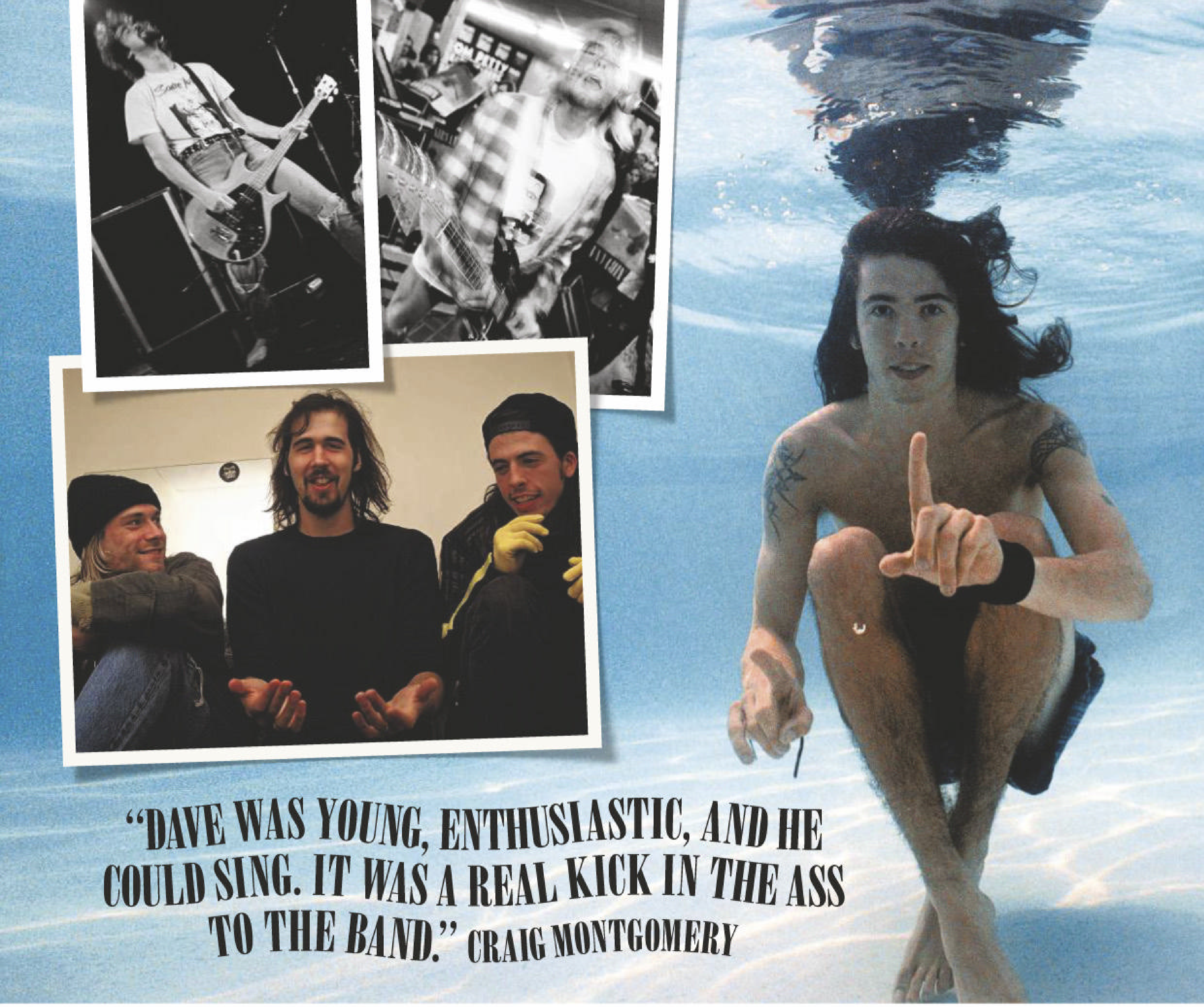
The songs were so well-rehearsed (and often road-tested) that only the lyrics needed finishing off. With notebooks full of alternative lines to choose from, Cobain rewrote most of the verses of Smells Like Teen Spirit in the room, running different options past Vig. The opening of aggro-feminist war cry Territorial Pissings, in which Novoselic mangles The Youngbloods' 1967 hit Get Together into a half-sarcastic, half-rueful requiem for the hippy dream, was another last-minute decision. "Kurt's like, 'Krist, you've got to do something. We need you on this,'" he recalls. "That's the first thing that jumped into my mind. It's comic relief."

Only two songs proved tricky. The first day they attempted Lithium, the tempo kept slipping away from them. "After three or four takes Kurt just went mental and they did Endless Nameless and he smashed the shit out of his guitar at the end," says Vig. "I had to put on a search around LA to find a replacement the next day." Vig gave Grohl a little drum machine so that he could practise with a click track. "He told me years later that I broke his heart that day but lo and behold, the next day they played Lithium perfectly in the first take."

The other headache was Something In The Way, a barely-there dirge loosely inspired by Cobain's period of sleeping rough in 1985. After struggling in the main room, the singer lay down on the control-room couch and started strumming. "I said, 'Hold

Yesterday's men: Skid Row, with (centre) Seb Bach.

Kirk Weddle, courtesy of ACC Art Books www.accartbooks.com/; Charles Peterson (2), Dalle/Richard Bellia, Getty



"DAVE WAS YOUNG, ENTHUSIASTIC, AND HE COULD SING. IT WAS A REAL KICK IN THE ASS TO THE BAND." CRAIG MONTGOMERY

Found my friends: (main) Dave Grohl goes in deep; (above, clockwise) Nirvana in Bristol on the opening night of the *Nevermind* European Tour, November 4, 1991; Novoselic at Vancouver Commodore Ballroom, March 8, '91; Cobain feels the teen spirit rising during a *Nevermind* pre-release party at Beehive Music & Video, Seattle University District, September 16, '91.

on', kicked the band out, unplugged the phone, put a sign on the door, got a mike and just recorded him laying on the couch," says Vig. "He was barely singing. I kept having to turn the gain up."

Cobain's out-of-tune guitar and shaky timing meant that overdubbing the rhythm section and Kirk Canning's cello part was an arduous job. "I think it took three days," says Vig. "It was the last thing we cut. It's probably my favourite track on *Nevermind*."

CANNING WAS MARRIED TO L7'S DRUMMER DEE Plakas and Grohl had been dating bassist Jennifer Finch since their UK tour, so the bands ended up hanging out at Sound City, where they became combatants in a giant food fight that left both bands Pollocked with BBQ sauce. Another visitor was Grohl's friend from Virginia (and, later, his drum tech) Barrett Jones. "I remember how incredible it sounded coming out of the speakers," he says. "I literally got shivers every day. I said to Kurt, 'This stuff is going to be huge. You'll be on the cover of Rolling Stone within a year.' He laughed it off."

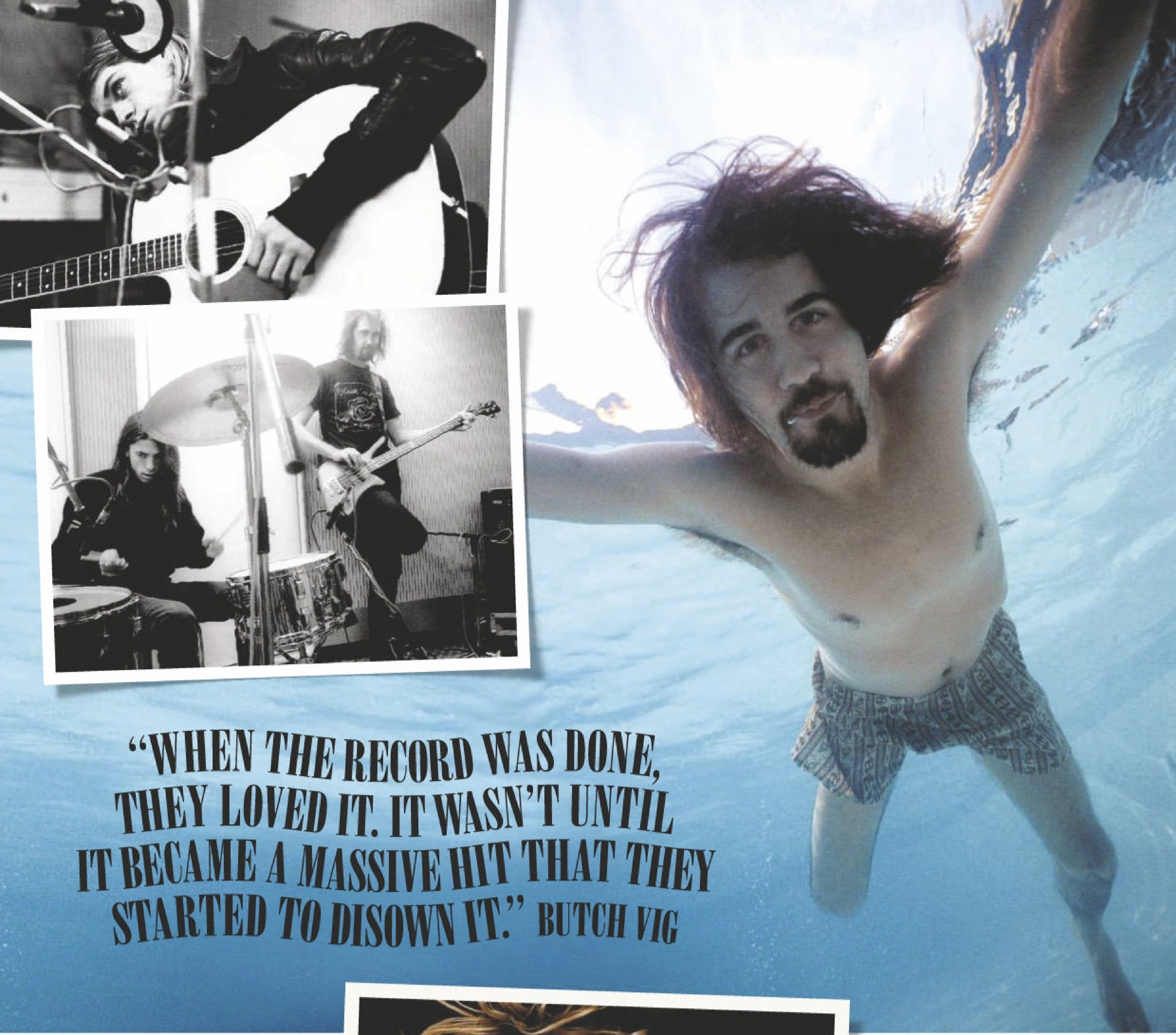
"Every song was great, and that's what made them different from anyone else," says Donita Sparks. "There was a lot of aggression in music, flipping off the establishment, goofing around… Nirvana had that but they also had really, really good songs. I was very fucking jealous: Man, what am I doing? I gotta write some songs!"

In an April interview with Offbeat magazine, Cobain had been bullish about leaving behind "the die-hard grunge freaks: if they can't appreciate our pop stuff, then fuck 'em." But journalists' obsession with the move to DGC fuelled his inner struggle between ambition and underground integrity, a duality summed up by his distinctive use of an Electro-Harmonix Small Clone chorus pedal fed through distortion, as heard on the verses of Come As You Are and Smells Like Teen Spirit: sweet and sour, beauty and noise.

"Kurt was always conflicted," says Vig. "He wanted to be famous but he had this punk authenticity that he wanted to retain. I kept saying studio and live are two different things."

Cobain's doubts came to a head during the mixing stage. "Listening to the mixes now, I think they sound pretty good but at the time I was struggling because the band was in the room with me," says Vig. "Kurt would say things like, 'Turn off all the treble on the guitars, I want it to sound more like Black Sabbath.' And I'd say, 'You can't do that, the guitars are going to sound like shit.' And then I'd turn the treble off and he'd say, 'Yeah, you're right.'"

Gersh was unhappy with the compromised results and gave Nirvana a list of potential mixers. The name of Andy Wallace, an avuncular pro whose credits ranged from Slayer to Madonna, leapt out. He was mostly left alone but the band was there on day one to hear him mix On A Plain. "He really dumped a lot of sugar on that song," says Novoselic. "There is this sweet sheen to *Nevermind*. In the ➢



“WHEN THE RECORD WAS DONE, THEY LOVED IT. IT WASN’T UNTIL IT BECAME A MASSIVE HIT THAT THEY STARTED TO DISOWN IT.” BUTCH VIG

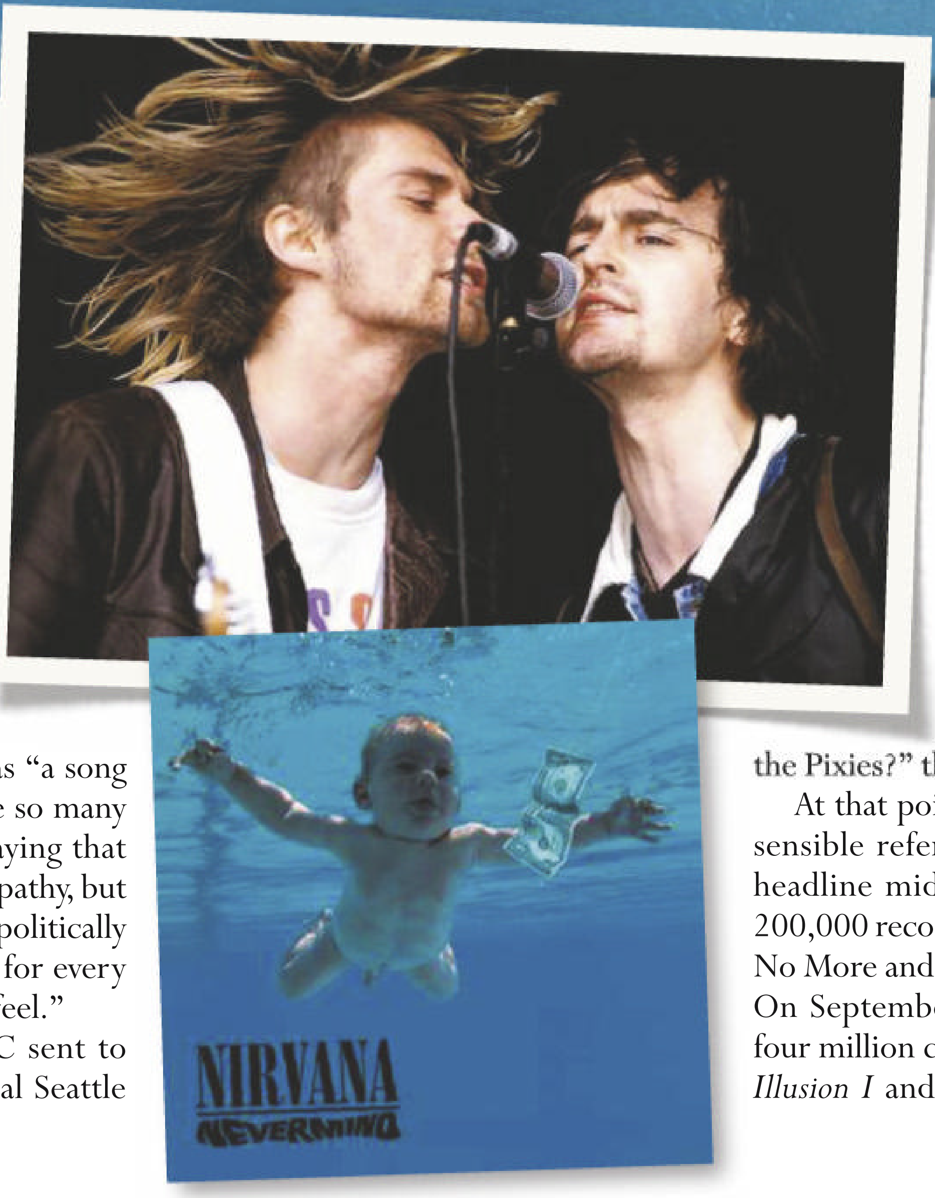
Everybody get together: (main) Krist Novoselic holds his breath; (insets, above) Nirvana recording a Dutch radio session at NOB Audio, Hilversum, November 25, 1991; (right) The Vaselines’ Eugene Kelly joins Nirvana to sing Molly’s Lips at Reading Festival, August 23, 1991.

Kirk Weddle, courtesy of ACC Art Books www.accartbooks.com/ Camera Press, Getty (3)

< end, it’s a popular record and that’s what it took to do it.”

Cobain’s mixed feelings about the sound mirrored the songs’ taut ambivalence. When asked to explain their meaning, he tended to contradict himself, perhaps because the lyrics were self-subverting. Smells Like Teen Spirit, he told the Phoenix New Times, was “a song I really can’t describe, ’cos there are so many contradictions. I’m not only just saying that I’m disgusted with my generation’s apathy, but I’m also making fun of being anally politically correct… There’s a disclaimer line for every serious line because that’s the way I feel.”

His quotes in the bio that DGC sent to journalists oscillated between typical Seattle sarcasm and earnest sincerity. “There’s no rebellion in rock’n’roll anymore,” he said. “I hope underground music can influence the mainstream and shake up the kids… Maybe what we need is a new generation gap.”



CRAIG MONTGOMERY first heard *Nevermind* while driving Cobain to LA in August to shoot the Smells Like Teen Spirit video. “Do you think it sounds too much like the Pixies?” the singer asked him.

At that point, Pixies and Sonic Youth were sensible reference points: bands who could headline mid-sized theatres and sell maybe 200,000 records. Novoselic says they saw Faith No More and Jane’s Addiction as forerunners. On September 24, one week after shipping four million copies of Guns N’Roses’ *Use Your Illusion I* and *II*, Geffen shipped just 46,251 copies of *Nevermind* in the US. It entered the Billboard Hot 200 at Number 144. With a lot of luck and hard work, Geffen thought it might eventually go gold. “We could be just a flash in the pan,” Cobain told Alternative Press magazine on September 28. “Actually, I hope we are.”

It is hard now to comprehend the speed of it. On release day, Nirvana played a last-minute all-ages show in Boston that didn’t sell out. Just days later, Mark Kates recalls, “I’m talking to my attorney whose brother is an undergraduate and he says every single bedroom in his fraternity is blasting this album all the time.” CD pressing plants were struggling to meet demand. “It was unfathomable,” says Kates. “There was no precedent.”

Vig clocked just how fast things were changing when he saw Nirvana play the Metro in Chicago on October 12. “It was already sold out but there were another thousand people trying to get in. As soon as the lights went down, everyone was screaming. It was like Beatlemania. That’s the first inkling I got that people were reacting to it in an extremely emotional way.”

It was the voice, he realised. “He sings with such vulnerability, fear, frustration, anger and sadness, sometimes all in the same song. Y’know, the songs are super-hooky, the band was tight, but Kurt’s singing is what gave the record that X-factor that turned it into a *Zeitgeist* moment.”

Cobain, however, was unnerved by the influx of the mainstream lunkheads he had preemptively mocked on In Bloom. Add to that his chronic stomach pain, his burgeoning heroin addiction, the media circus around his relationship with Hole singer Courtney Love, and a saturated promotion schedule, and it’s no surprise the wheels came off the tour in December. “I knew that it would be tough for Kurt,” says Poneman. “I saw it be tough for other people who went through one-tenth of what those guys endured. Kurt was the perfect vehicle for things to go awry.”

Later, Cobain took out his anxieties on the sound of *Nevermind*, claiming he was “embarrassed” by it. “When the record was done, they loved it,” says Vig. “It wasn’t until it became a massive hit that they started to disown it, because you can’t be punk and say, ‘Look how great our record is, it’s sold 10 million copies.’ I was disappointed but I understood. Meanwhile Kurt was calling me multiple times trying to convince me to do [Hole’s] *Live Through This*.”

ON JANUARY 11, 1992, *NEVERMIND* CAPPED ITS STARTLING ascent by replacing Michael Jackson’s *Dangerous* at the top of the Hot 200. The album not only triggered an alternative rock gold-rush; it became synonymous with the post-boomer generation that was being called the “baby busters” and later Generation X: disillusioned, ironic and contemptuous of mainstream culture. Nirvana’s palpable discomfort only confirmed their outsider credentials. “It’s important to remember that what happened to them doesn’t happen to many people,” says Montgomery. “There’s no textbook on how to handle that.”

Nevermind coincided with breakthrough albums by Pearl Jam, Soundgarden and the Red Hot Chili Peppers, so it’s worth wondering if the alt-rock boom would have occurred even without it. “It would have happened but there wouldn’t have been as defining a moment,” Kates argues. “Teen Spirit struck a chord in so many people in so many ways that no one could have ever predicted, least of all us.”

Novoselic still gets people telling him that *Nevermind* changed their lives, but it changed Nirvana’s lives in much more complicated ways, triggering two-and-half years of turmoil which culminated in Cobain’s suicide in April 1994. “You parachute out, and land, and pick up the pieces,” he says now. “But that’s me. In the end, what you find in that record is up to you.”

He still finds it strange that a bunch of songs could have had such vast repercussions – for popular culture, and for the people who made them. “It’s a heavy rock’n’roll record, that’s all it really is. Something happened where it was bigger than life and captured the imaginations of people, but if you look at the genesis of it, it’s amazing.”

Dickless
HOW ARE YOU

Playing it cool: Novoselic, Cobain and Grohl in Madrid, July 3, 1992.

NEVERMIND: THE AFTERMATH

After January ’92’s chart-topping triumph, NIRVANA’s hangover kicked in with a vengeance. By Dorian Lynskey.

NIRVANA
IN UTERO

ONE THING everyone who worked with Nirvana can agree upon is that they never played enough shows. The dates between September and December 1991 were meant to be just the first leg of the *Nevermind* tour. “Based on where they were at, it was completely reasonable, if not ambitious,” says DGC’s Mark Kates. But soundman Craig Montgomery claims that the band were getting frustrated with clubs and small theatres. “The record label tells you, ‘Next time around we’ll do the big one,’ but how do you know there’s gonna be a next time?”

Indeed, there wouldn’t be a next time. Thanks to Cobain’s personal issues, and simmering discontent around the division of songwriting royalties for *Nevermind*, Nirvana ended the year in a fragile state. “There were definitely times when it was good and it was all working,” says Montgomery, “but in the background there were always these issues. That’s what kept the band off the road for most of 1992.”

Nirvana celebrated New Year’s Eve 1991 by playing between Pearl Jam and Red Hot Chili Peppers at the Cow Palace in California, where Kurt Cobain and Courtney Love posted a sign on their hotel room door: “No Famous People Please. We’re Fucking.” At the end of January, they toured the Pacific and ended up in Hawaii, where the couple got married. Due to tensions between his wife Shelli and Love, Novoselic did not attend the wedding. A US arena tour booked for the April and May was junked. “All I need is a break,” Cobain promised Rolling Stone in March. “I’m going to get healthy and start over.”

The band didn’t fruitfully reconvene until April 7, when they recorded a few tracks in the Laundry Room, the basement studio in the house that Grohl shared with his drum tech and sometime producer Barrett Jones. “We did the whole thing in two days on an 8-track,” says Jones, “so it was not going to sound like *Nevermind*.” He laughs. “No danger of that.”

Very Ape and Frances Farmer Will Have Her Revenge On Seattle were rehearsed at the Laundry Room but not recorded. In fact, the majority of what became *In Utero* had either been demoed or played live by that point. Cobain wrote Rape Me in the Oakwood apartments during the *Nevermind* sessions. “When they were getting ready to do *Nevermind*, there was a creative burst,” says Montgomery. “When it came to doing *In Utero*, it seemed to me like the well was dry so he went back to some of these older ideas he had lying around.”

Nirvana played some rescheduled European shows in June and July but their dysfunction was by now so obvious it was rumoured they wouldn’t even make it to Reading Festival at the end of August. “We were making jokes about it,” remembers Jones. “Everybody thinks it’s not going to happen. Obviously, it’s going to happen! I don’t know what it was about that night but, out of probably 100 shows I saw them play, that was the best one.”

Montgomery saw the trainwreck show in Buenos Aires that brought the *Nevermind* era to a bitter conclusion in October 1992, but insists those were rare. “You would be surprised how consistent they were. Whatever else was going on, when it came to showtime, for the most part, they really delivered.”

Novoselic’s happiest memories of that year are the writing sessions, which took him back to the months before *Nevermind*. “I wish we would have recorded these jams,” he says. “We would play for hours and come up with songs, then forget them. That was the glue that kept us together. It was our little getaway.”

JEFF WAYNE'S MUSICAL VERSION OF THE WAR OF THE WORLDS

Mars audio quartet: (far left) Richard Burton records his lines in California in 1976; (at rear) Jerry Wayne, Jeff Wayne; (front right) David Essex; (above) *The War Of The Worlds* 1978 LP sleeve; a tripod from the evolving stage show.

THE WAR OF THE WORLDS BEGINS

In 1978, JEFF WAYNE's musical version of H.G. Wells' sci-fi classic from 1898 was a surprise monster hit. Yet his enduring audio-dramatisation of Mars invading the Earth was arrived at via adverts for bacon and gin, calls to Richard Burton, 'orrible punk nicknames, some handy luck with the Musicians' Union and incomprehension from his record label. Forty-three years on, it refuses to go gently. "People were calling me bonkers," says Wayne, "but it was the only book that moved me enough."

Interviews by **MARTIN ASTON**

Jeff Wayne: In 1969, my dad [Jerry]'s production company staged a West End musical adaptation of Charles Dickens' A Tale Of Two Cities, and he asked me to write the score. I was classically trained and had played in bands but I thought dad was bonkers because he could get any top composer. A TV director loved the score and hired me for a commercial for the Cheese Marketing Board, which won an award and led to lots more work.

Gary Osborne: Jingles now are mostly someone with a ukulele or whistling, but back then, it was the cream of singers, like Madeline Bell or Doris Troy, proper tunes and musicians.

JW: I approached every jingle as if it was destined to be a Number 1 single. Gordon's Gin [later covered by The Human League] is mine, but if I'm known for just one ad, it's the Esso Tiger [first used in 1975].

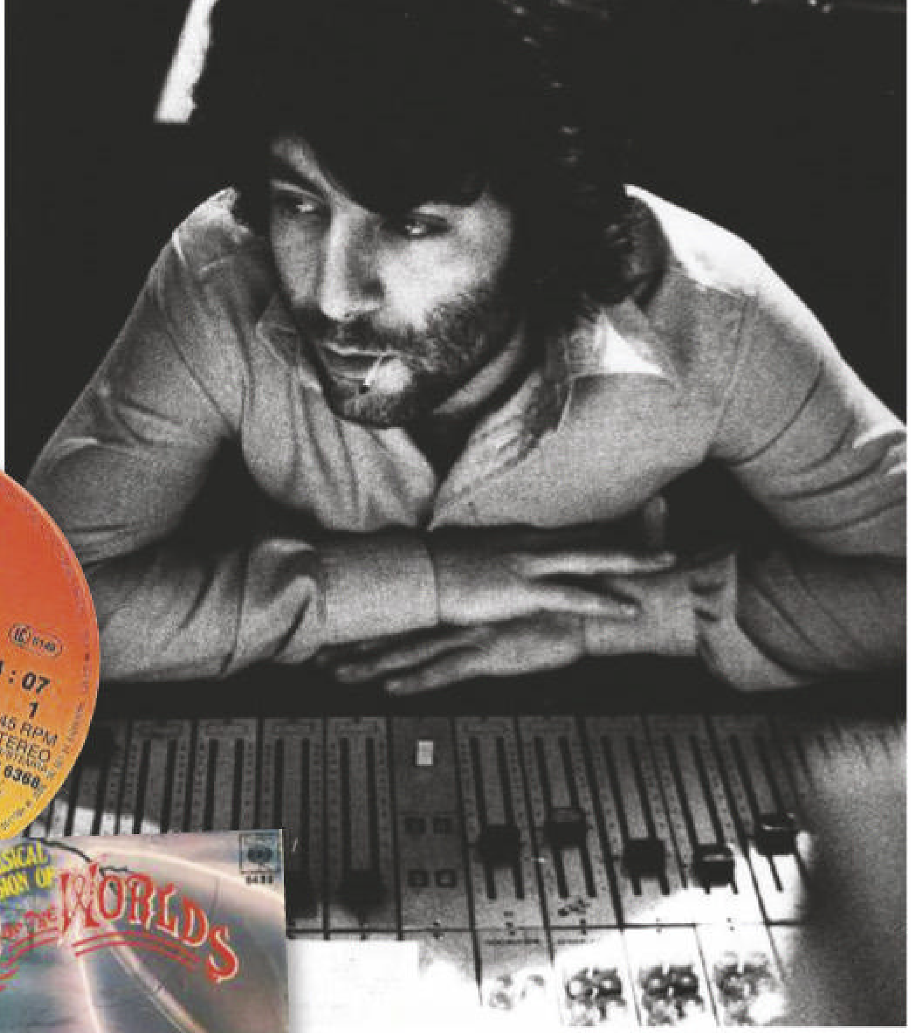
GO: Myself and Paul Vigrass were singers who Jeff hired for sessions: that's us singing about Danish bacon (*sings "'Da-a-nish Bacon, the great taste comes up fresh every ti-ime'"*) and McDougalls flour. David Essex sang the Pledge and Younger's Tartan beer ads.

JW: I never saw myself as only writing for advertising. I started producing albums, for Vigrass & Osborne and David Essex, who I'd met through [gospel-based musical] Godspell. My father reminded me that I'd always wanted to find a story to turn into a musical. 20,000 Leagues Under The Sea, Brave New World and Day Of The Triffids were discussed, but the only book that moved me enough was H.G. Wells' The War Of The Worlds.

David Essex: I thought a musical War Of The Worlds was a great idea. Anything that panicked America, as Orson Welles had in his radio version, must be interesting. ➢

Alamy, Getty

Tripod shuffle (this page, clockwise from right): Wayne, Julie Covington and lyricist Gary Osborne routine The Spirit Of Man, Advision Studios, London, late 1976; Wayne at the mixing board; Jeff on Tiswas in 1978; singles from the project; Wayne flanked by his parents Doreen and Jerry, with (standing at back) David Essex (left) and director Charles Dubin.



CBS
From JEFF WAYNE'S "WAR OF THE WORLDS" featuring JUSTIN HAYWARD
FOREVER AUTUMN
4:07
45 RPM STEREO
CBS 6368

JEFF WAYNE'S MUSICAL VERSION OF THE WAR OF THE WORLDS
The Eve Of The War
The Red Weed

Thunder Child
From JEFF WAYNE'S WAR OF THE WORLDS
Featuring the vocal performance of Chris Thompson

“WE TOOK IT SERIOUSLY. THIS WASN'T JUST SOME SCI-FI ROMP.”

Chris Spedding

JW: It was a great story with a great vision, an alien invasion from Mars with underlying themes of faith, hope and love. Wells was taking a pop at the expanding British Empire, and he felt any invasion was wrong. I wanted to stay as true as possible to H.G.'s characters, places and themes, unlike previous adaptations. My stepmother, Doreen, was a journalist and author, who wrote a script that I wrote the score around. I never saw The War Of The Worlds as a rock opera, or prog rock, it was the story that motivated me.

GO: Jeff asked me to write the lyrics. When I drove from my house in Hampstead to Jeff's office or to the studio [Advision, in Fitzrovia], I'd pass what had been H.G. Wells's home in Primrose Hill, where the Martians eventually meet their nemesis, which added a spooky vibe. I can still visualise dying Martian machines and crows picking on the innards of people.

JW: The one pure acting role was The Journalist, a survivor of the 1898 Martian invasion telling the story in 1904 for his newspaper. I needed a voice that would instantly transport the listener into our world. I had a wish list of one: Richard Burton. But would he remotely consider it? I got lucky, because friends had seen Richard on Broadway doing [Peter Shaffer's play] Equus. I got a letter sent to the stage door, and I got a call after, on Richard's behalf: “Count him in, dear boy!” the guy said.

DE: I played the Artilleryman, a wide-eyed dreamer who thinks mankind can start again, living underground. I had a scene with Richard Burton, so we flew to LA where he was filming. Eventually the great man turned up. Jeff had timed the musical edits for us but Richard said, “I don't want to hear any of that music, I want to record this wild,” which was strange, but he was formidably charismatic and I sounded like Mickey Mouse alongside him.

JW: The Journalist travels through the story, coming across a range of characters caught up in this horrific invasion, who were played by singers. I knew David, of course, and Julie [Covington] from Godspell too, who played Beth, the wife of the priest, Parson Nathaniel. He believes Martians are the devil, whilst Beth reminds him about faith, hope and love. The priest was going to be played by Paul Rodgers [Free], who recorded his vocals but he wouldn't come back to do the acting part. I asked Phil Lynott [Thin Lizzy] instead, who also had an extraordinary voice.

GO: Jeff is meticulous, and everything had to be as good as he could hear it in his head, or better. It didn't leave much room for artists to put themselves into the song. The only exception was Phil Lynott. Jeff told him, “These are the notes,” but I said, “Jeff, that's not the way Phil sings.” So we had to accommodate him.

Chris Thompson: I consider myself extraordinarily lucky to have worked with Jeff but he was a hard taskmaster. “Move that note a little longer… it needs to move more with the rhythm.” I was really happy with the end result, then Jeff said, come back tomorrow and double-track it, which was even harder! But the end result [Thunderchild] blew me away, as did the whole record, how the music and words captured the dynamics of the story, right from the opening orchestral riff – (sings *duh-duh-duuuh!*) – down to Jeff having Ken Freeman [synths] build a machine to make the sound of the Martians.

Justin Hayward: I had a call, asking if I was the guy who sang Nights In White Satin: I guess Jeff wanted that same plaintive feel. He sent over a demo of Forever Autumn.

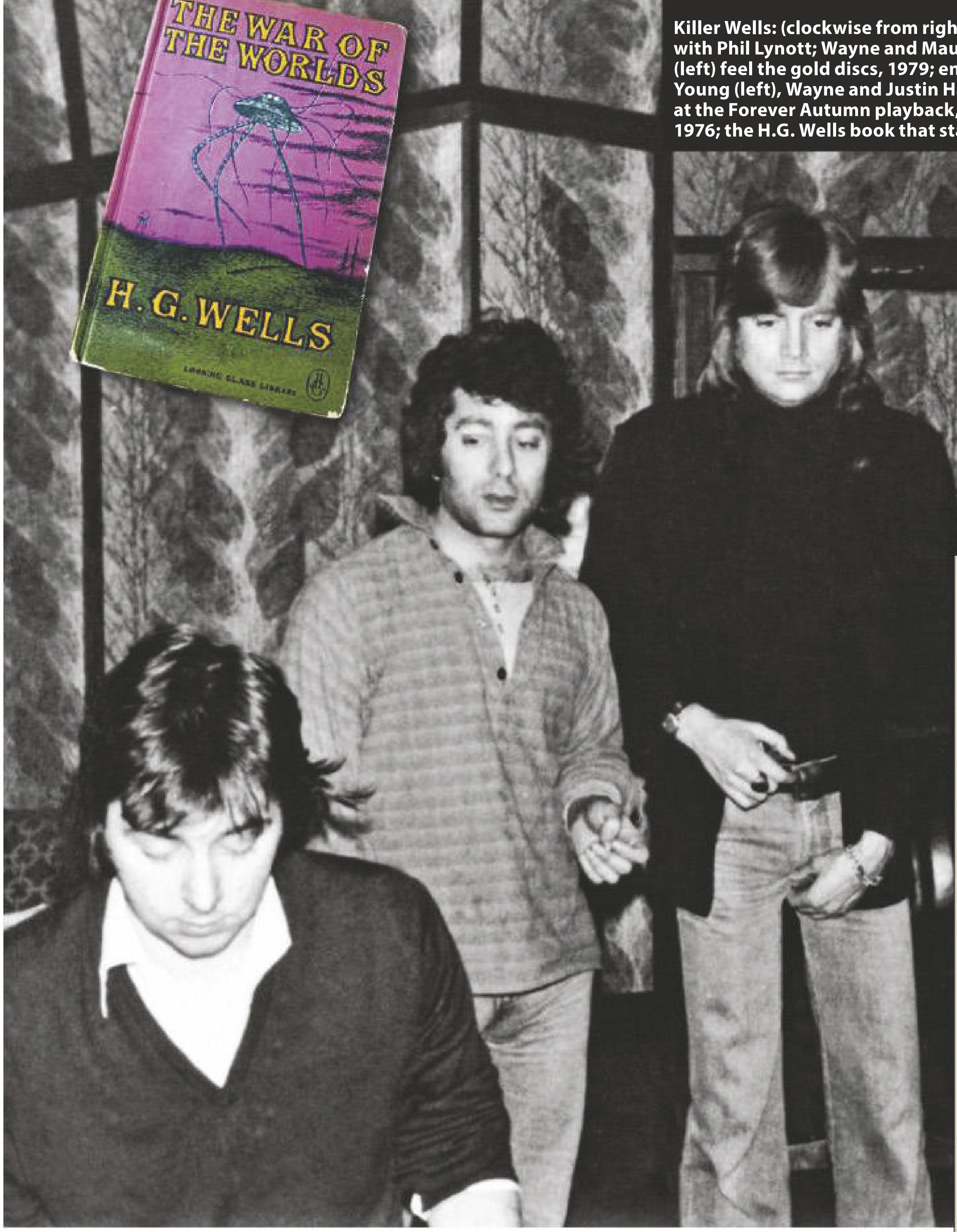
JW: I'd done a Lego ad that became very popular. People wrote in, asking if it was a record they could buy, which it wasn't until Vigrass & Osborne wrote lyrics and it became Forever Autumn. There was a moment in the score from a story point of view, when the wife of The Journalist is missing, and it was as if Forever Autumn had been written for it.

JH: I wondered who would be interested in such a project, and to this day, I don't know if I was right for the sung thoughts of Richard Burton. I just knew Jeff was creating something really substantial, and when I heard Phil Lynott was involved, I knew it would have huge credibility. Jeff later asked me to sing Eve Of The War that, even more than Forever Autumn, became the key track because they kept reprising the melody.

GO: Jeff lifted the two lines in Eve Of The War out of H.G. Wells' book – “The chances of anything coming from Mars are a million to one, he said/ But still they come.” I ended up writing three new lyrics – Spirit Of Man, Brave New World and Thunderchild, though two of the tracks were 11 and 12 minutes long, and dense with words, and complicated situations.

JW: People were calling me bonkers because they couldn't figure out what I was making, namely a continuous work rather than individual

Courtesy Jeff Wayne (5), Shutterstock, Getty (7)

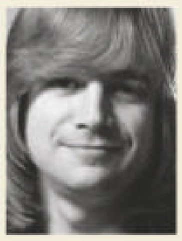


Killer Wells: (clockwise from right) Gary Osborne with Phil Lynott; Wayne and Maurice Oberstein (left) feel the gold discs, 1979; engineer Geoff Young (left), Wayne and Justin Hayward (right) at the Forever Autumn playback, Advision, 1976; the H.G. Wells book that started it all.

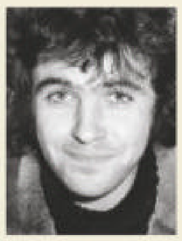
DRAMATIS PERSONAE

- **Jeff Wayne** (producer, composer, arranger)

- **Gary Osborne** (lyricist)

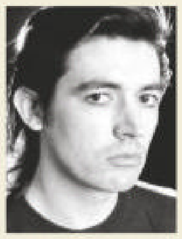


- **Justin Hayward** (vocalist)



- **David Essex** (vocalist)

- **Chris Thompson** (vocalist)



- **Chris Spedding** (guitarist)

- **Herbie Flowers** (bassist)

tracks of three to four minutes. Once CBS heard it, they couldn't get their heads around who might buy it: a 96-minute record without obvious singles, which didn't fit in 1977, where disco was king, and punk was the revolution.

GO: In the studio, we all had punk names. The ones I can remember are, I was Snot Gobber, Phil Lynott was Slim Chunder, and Jeff, being the boss, had to have the most extreme alias, so he was Cunt Asshole. What a wonderful bunch of guys, like Barry Morgan, Herbie Flowers and Chris Spedding.

Chris Spedding: We were the equivalent of the Wrecking Crew. Jeff knew how all his favourite session musicians played, so all he had to do was count us in. He knew what he wanted, a contemporary '70s sound rather than something that fitted with H.G. Wells. We took it seriously too. This wasn't just some sci-fi romp. Not with Richard Burton involved. I knew Jeff was capable of a major opus, which it turned out to be.

JW: CBS eventually got their heads around it. A year later, we had a press launch at the London Planetarium, with a laser show, and we could see the reaction. Forever Autumn came out before the album.

GO: Forever Autumn bubbled under the Top 30 for a while, but it was increasingly losing radio play. Then Top Of The Pops called. They had a union rule: that the orchestra had to be used once a show, and no Top 30 song could accommodate an orchestra that week. Forever Autumn was the highest candidate, at Number 46. If another candidate had been 45, Forever Autumn might never have reached the Top 30. It ended up at Number 5 [in August 1978] and made a huge difference to the album's initial success.

JH: Forever Autumn was the greatest gift, because I can go anywhere in the world and people know it. I've heard that it's popular at funerals, just like Nights In White Satin is popular at weddings.

JW: The album [released June 9, 1978] charted for 330 consecutive weeks, and has bounced in and out over the years. It's currently sold about 16 million copies. Rather than being rejected during disco and punk, it found a place. We couldn't have staged The War Of The Worlds in the '70s, but arenas, and particularly technology, have grown, so in 2006 it became a multimedia show, with The Journalist rendered in 3D and giant Martian fighting machines.

Herbie Flowers: To see an orchestra of 40 on-stage, and a 10-piece band, and Jeff on his podium in the middle, and a giant screen with shots of space and machines and a big picture of Richard Burton, and effects like flames, it's ridiculous. But when you add it all up, it was like a Mendelssohn piano concerto, impossible in theory but in practice, gigantic genius. The oddest things are often the most interesting.

JW: We toured for about six years before I thought of the New Generation version [Liam Neeson as the Journalist, roles for Gary Barlow and Ricky Wilson], and to extend the story after I saw what played well to a live audience. With Richard [Burton] and Phil [Lynott] long gone, it was a natural breaking point.

CT: The last time I did the show, at Wembley Arena [in December 2010], at the end I walked past Jeff's dressing room and heard him discussing the idea of the New Generation, and heard myself getting sacked! I was pretty disappointed with that. So was Justin. We both thought, Fuck man, someone else is singing our songs when we're still alive! They even got rid of Richard Burton.

JW: The Martians, with all their superior machinery and weaponry, hadn't anticipated human bacteria – with a sneeze, they were wiped out. Who'd have known that, over a hundred years later, we'd face an epic pandemic along the same lines? The forthcoming tour is titled Life Begins Again, after the song I introduced on the 2014 tour. It's relevant to both The War of The Worlds, and to the real world.

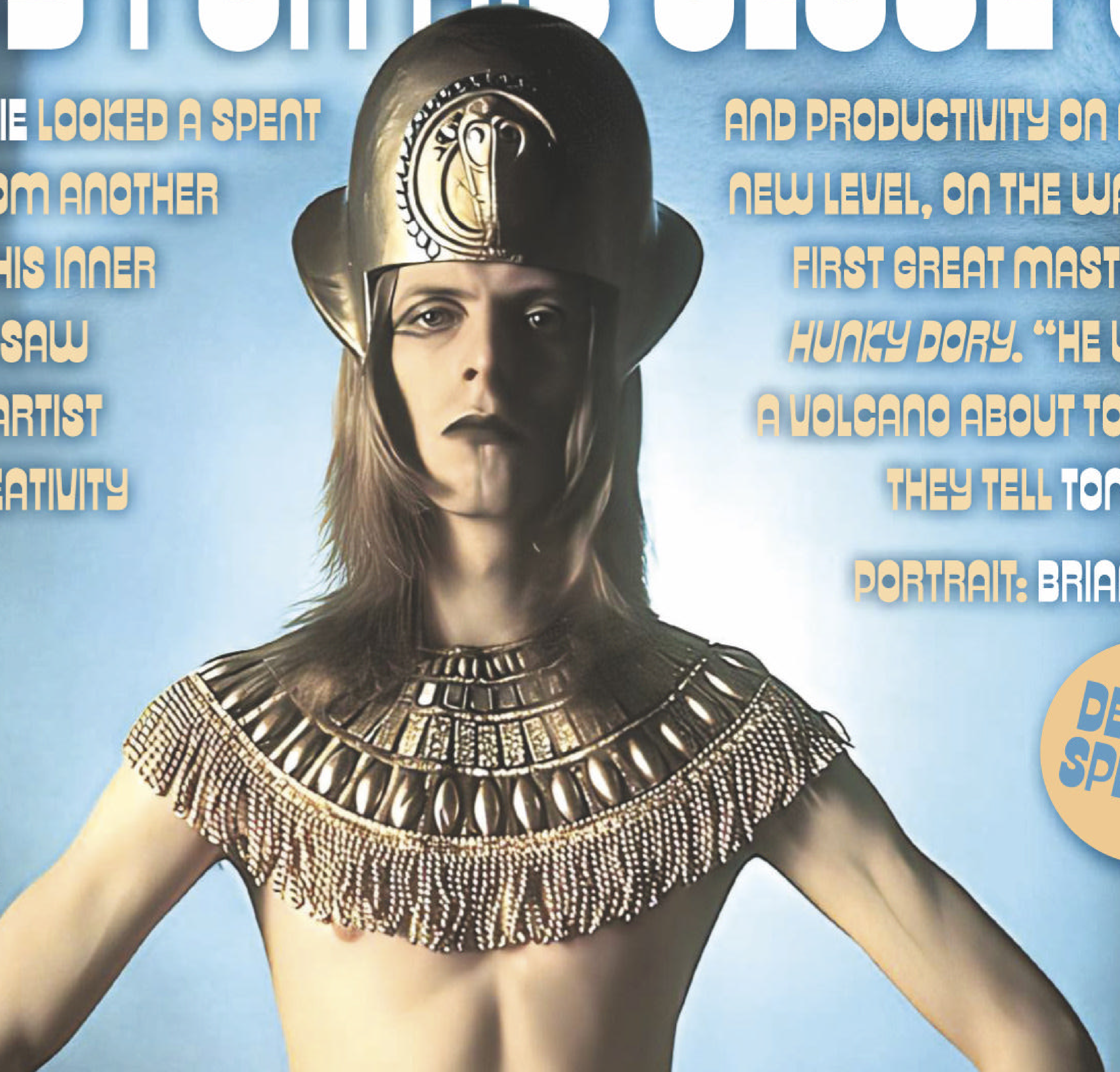
DE: Whenever it comes around again, I laugh and think, There goes Jeff again. But people love it. Ⓜ

Jeff Wayne's Musical Version Of The War Of The Worlds: The Life Begins Again Tour opens in March 2022.

READY FOR HIS CLOSE-UP

In 1971, **David Bowie** looked a spent force, reeling from another flop. Denizens of his inner circle, however, saw another side: an artist possessed by creativity and productivity on a whole new level, on the way to his first great masterpiece, *Hunky Dory*. "He was like a volcano about to erupt," they tell **Tom Doyle**.

Portrait: **Brian Ward.**



RCA
VICTOR
DAVID BOWIE
HUNKY DORY

DEFRIES SPEAKS!

The start of a coming race: David Bowie, dressing the part to establish his dynasty.

© Brian Ward 1971/Gema Archive/IconicPix

IT IS THE SPRING OF 1971 AND WORKS-IN-PROGRESS ARE EMANATING FROM THE room where the 24-year-old songwriter sits at his grand piano. Fragments of lyrics and melodies leak out into the spacious lobby, replete with grandly sweeping stairway, of the enormous ground floor Flat 7 at Haddon Hall, 42 Southend Road, Beckenham, Kent. Floating through a serving window into the tiny kitchen, these sounds reach the ears of guitarist Mick Ronson and drummer Woody Woodmansey. The pair – in the singer's band since early 1970 – are busy making breakfast.

"You'd hear him piecing things together," Woodmansey tells MOJO today. "We'd hear, 'Mickey Mouse has grown up a cow' coming through the butler's hatch. We'd be there going, 'Fucking hell that's a bit weird, innit?' (*laughs*) Y'know, 'Lennon's on sale again' and 'the mice in their million hordes'. 'What the fuck? Pass us the toast.'"

David Bowie was on a creative roll, and keen to let everyone know it. "He'd say, 'Woody, I've finished one, come in and have a listen,'" the drummer remembers. "You'd go in, and he'd play Oh! You Pretty Things, or he'd pick the guitar up and play Quicksand. You'd go, 'Holy shit, that's good.'"

Weekends would see Bowie's ex-girlfriend Dana Gillespie drop by with her new partner, Bowie's current manager, Tony Defries, to hang out with the singer and his pregnant wife, Angie.

"David and Angie and I, we'd all sit on his double bed and watch something on television," says ➢

➢ Gillespie. "He'd be writing songs, but always on the guitar, while we'd be 'decomposing' around him, as we jokingly called it."

For David Bowie, 1971 so far had been by turns frustrating and hyper-productive. January had been marked by his third post-Space Oddity flop single – the odd, sex magickal bolero of Holy Holy – while April saw his third album, *The Man Who Sold The World*, die in the light immediately following its UK release.

Like the other visitors to Haddon Hall that spring, however, Tony Defries could hear that Bowie's latest songs were on another level altogether. Speaking to MOJO today, the media-reticent former manager is breaking his silence to talk about the circumstances surrounding the creation of *Hunky Dory* – the album where David Bowie *became* David Bowie – to mark its 50th anniversary.

When he'd taken over the business affairs of the still-struggling artist the year before, Defries saw the superstar potential in Bowie, where at the time most didn't. "Yeah, I did," he says, via Skype from his home in South Africa. "Part of it was his ability to create landscapes and characters that related to himself that would, I felt, ultimately relate to everybody.

"David did have this very nice, almost childlike way of appealing to people," Defries adds. "Of saying, 'Look, I need help.' I call it the 'dying swan'. Y'know, that thing where somebody calls for sympathy, but at the same time asks you to protect them, to help them. So, David used to do that a lot.

"I saw David as, OK, he's good-looking in a strange sort of way. He's appealing because of this sort of 'dying swan' thing. But then he can be brave, and he's got enormous vision in his songwriting, but he hasn't actually exploited it. He's just on the fringes."

One of Bowie's main problems so far had been that he fitted in nowhere: neither identifiably pop nor underground. Soon, he would turn his apartness to his advantage. "He did have 300 ideas," points out Woodmansey, "though the dots were not joined." But by putting his unique spin on the singer-songwriter approach that was the vogue in '71 and stirring in influences from Neil Young to Frank Sinatra to Lou Reed, he was to create his first masterpiece.

6052 049
David Bowie
HOLY HOLY
Black Country Rock
David Bowie
Changes
RCA
DAVID BOWIE
Ask for album
HUNKY DORY
Andy Warhol

Since signing with Defries, Bowie had striven to refocus his writing and move away from what he called "the great drooling epics" of his previous two albums. Exhibit A was the succinct and agenda-setting Changes, which directly addressed his professional frustrations so far.

"David expressed this really well," says Defries. "When he starts Changes, he says, 'I still don't know what I was waiting for. And my time was running wild. A million dead-end streets.' It's like he hasn't got time to reach that place that he's striving to reach where people do recognise him."

"Changes was basically him saying, 'Y'know, I've kind of fucked up 'til now,'" laughs Woodmansey. "'But watch out.'"

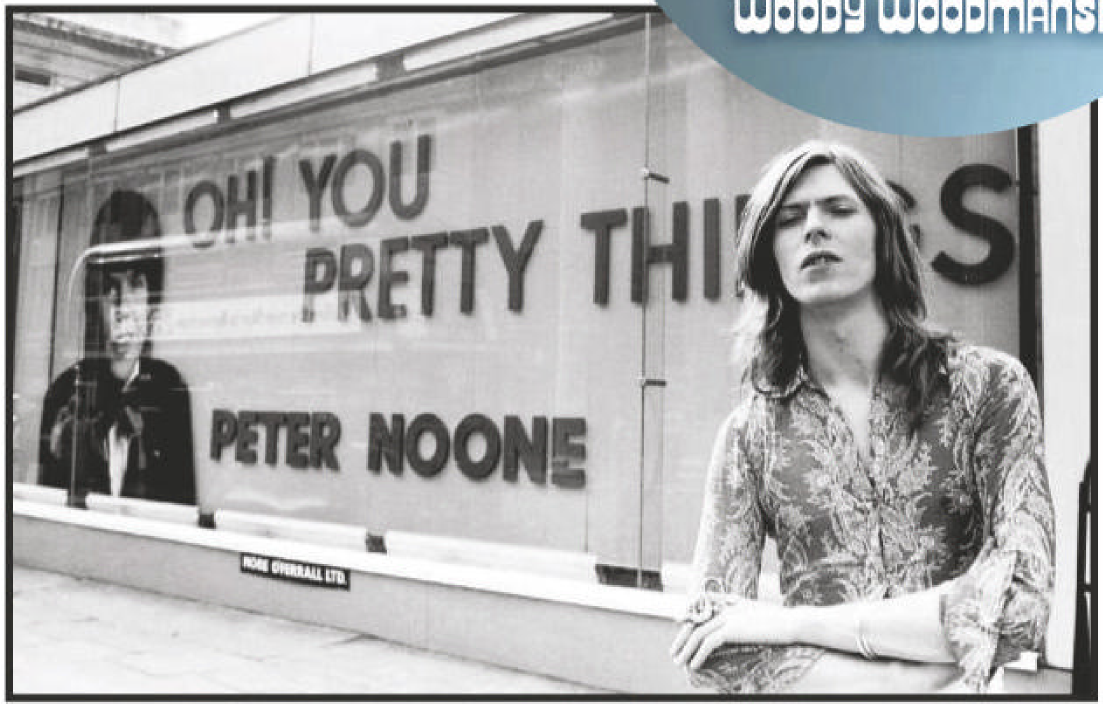
George Underwood, the cover designer of *Hunky Dory* and Bowie's friend and one-time King Bees bandmate, disagrees, but only partly. "I didn't think David was particularly frustrated or depressed," he says. "He was just restless, and like a volcano about to erupt."

> "WE'D HEAR, 'MICKEY MOUSE HAS GROWN UP A COW' COMING THROUGH THE BUTLER'S HATCH. WE'D BE GOING, 'FUCKING HELL THAT'S A BIT WEIRD.'"
> WOODY WOODMANSEY

YET, AS THE YEAR BEGAN, THERE was evidence that David Bowie was perhaps more interested in a career as a jobbing songwriter than as a performer. Since January '71, he had been in and out of a Mayfair studio owned by Radio Luxembourg, demoing new compositions that he had one eye on others recording.

Bowie had apparently had Leon Russell in mind when he wrote the sci-fi pop of Oh! You Pretty Things, though it was given to toothy singer Peter Noone, becoming his first solo hit (Number 12 in June) following the breakup of his former band, Herman's Hermits. Other songs were turned down by name artists: the Brel-like melodrama of How Lucky You Are was offered to Tom Jones (presumably due to its faint echoes of Delilah), Hang Onto Yourself was presented to Gene Vincent and, later, even Kooks was touted to The Carpenters.

The Tin Pan Alley approach seemed to liberate Bowie creatively, though the song-hawking route was one he had considered years before. "He and I had always discussed this," says Dana Gillespie. "We used to sit in the Gioconda café in Denmark Street in '64 ➢



Make way for the Homo Superior: (right) Bowie at the piano, Haddon Hall, Beckenham, April 20, 1971; (this page, from top) Mick Ronson (left) and Woody Woodmansey, 1971; Bowie 45s and *The Man Who Sold The World* LP; the ambitious songwriter poses in front of a poster for former Herman's Hermit Peter Noone's May '71 debut solo hit cover of Oh! You Pretty Things.

Gema Archive/IconicPix, Peter Sanders (2), Mirrorpix

Kooks: David and Angie Bowie with Freddie Burretti (on floor), Haddon Hall, April '71; (below, from top) Arnold Corns 45 featuring Burretti's face; Neil Young's influential album; third Spider Trevor Bolder.

the arnold corns
moonage daydream
hang on to yourself

AFTER THE GOLD RUSH • NEIL YOUNG

< or something. The reason you sat there was to get in with the music publishers, to get one of your songs placed. I think David always considered himself a songwriter first. And the singer came up and joined his level of writing."

Bowie had signed a new publishing deal with Chrysalis Music in October '70, driving him on as a writer. One of the other key factors in his newfound confidence was financial stability. "It meant full-on creativity because he had the stress removed of having to pay bills and things," Gillespie says. "So, he wrote loads and loads of songs."

"Nobody had ever said to David, 'I will take care of everything. Just go and create,'" Defries stresses. "That Chrysalis advance was £5,000. In 1970, that was a lot of money. They were renting Haddon Hall for, like, seven pounds a month, I think, or something totally ridiculous. All of a sudden, he had more money than he'd ever had before.

"It was a major endorsement for David of his value," he adds. "What made David great was he was fragile. The first step was to give him some sense of creative confidence that he could say, 'Oh, Tony likes my songs. And now Chrysalis like my songs.' And that was a huge step forward."

In the meantime, Defries was busy extricating Bowie from his Mercury Records deal, arguing that because the label hadn't promoted his records as they'd originally agreed, they were in breach of contract. But it meant that for the time being Bowie couldn't record for any other record company either.

Looking for other ways to air his songs, he came up with the wonky concept of Arnold Corns, a band supposedly fronted by Bowie's suit designer and pal from Kensington gay club the Sombrero, Freddie Burretti. In March '71, a single was issued featuring Burretti's face on the cover and two tracks recorded at the Radio Luxembourg studio, Moonage Daydream b/w Hang Onto Yourself.

"Freddie was lovely to look at, but couldn't sing," says Gillespie. "In those days it wasn't so easy to put someone in tune. But David always loved an image and Freddie was very beautiful."

"If the guy had been able to sing, it might have stood a chance," reckons Woodmansey, who played drums on the second, scrapped Arnold Corns single, Looking For A Friend. "He was a really good-looking kid. But he couldn't fucking sing a note."

"Well, with David unfortunately his ideas were often not very well thought out," says Defries. "He would get sort of inspired: 'Well, Freddie is pretty, he makes wonderful clothes… why can't he be Mick Jagger?'

"David was singing [on the record], actually. The real problem was that Freddie couldn't get any level of credibility. You take a Freddie Burretti record that's called Arnold Corns to the BBC, and they recognise immediately that it's David singing. By singing on the record, he literally doomed the record. Nobody was going to play it."

AS MAY TURNED TO JUNE, MORE SIGNIFICANT events and creative moves were happening at Haddon Hall. On May 30, Bowie was at home listening to Neil Young's *After The Gold Rush* album when he received the call to let him know that Angie had given birth to their son, Zowie. Not uncoincidentally, the song that David had been tinkering around with that day – the weirdo parental address of Kooks – bore the distinct jaunty piano groove of Young's Till The Morning Comes. "Kooks was definitely influenced by Neil Young," confirms George Underwood.

In the days that followed, down in the basement practice space at Haddon Hall, the new line-up of Bowie's band was cemented with the arrival, on the recommendation of Woodmansey and Ronson, of their fellow Yorkshireman, bassist Trevor Bolder. There had been some urgency to his appointment, because on June 3 Bowie was due to broadcast a live session on Radio 1, from the BBC's Paris Theatre on Lower Regent Street, as part of John Peel's In Concert series. ➢

Mirrorpix, Getty, courtesy George Underwood

ART DECADES

BOWIE'S SCHOOL PAL GEORGE UNDERWOOD DESIGNED THE *HUNKY DORY* COVER, AND MUCH ELSE BESIDES, WRITES CLIVE PRIOR.

IN 1971, GEORGE Underwood had been friends with David Jones since the late '50s. It was an alliance that had famously survived the notorious incident at Bromley Technical High School where George – rivalling David for the attentions of one Carol Goldsmith – had punched the future star in the eye, resulting in the permanently dilated pupil that would later fuel the singer's otherworldly aura.

Bandmates in George & The Dragons and The King Bees, they had continued to bond over music, and Bowie held onto the hope that his pal could be a pop star too. In 1970-71, with Bowie's help, Underwood recorded Song For Bob Dylan, Hole In The Ground and We Should Be On By Now under the name Calvin James.

"It was the name Mickie Most gave me when I got a five-year recording contract with him in 1965," Underwood tells MOJO today. "David was very pissed off about that, as it looked like I was on my way to stardom before him. However, I had a breakdown soon after which forced me to leave the music business, which looking back was probably a good thing."

> "I WAS INTERPRETING DAVID'S IDEAS – TRYING TO MAKE THEM COME TO LIFE."
> GEORGE UNDERWOOD

Bowie's new manager Tony Defries was tasked with punting the new Calvin James demos to producer Mickie Most, but Underwood doubts they ever reached him.

"Very few people have heard the finished records," he reckons. "I liked Hole In The Ground best – you can hear David very clearly and we harmonised really well. Like the old days!"

Underwood's ambivalence towards a revived music career had a lot to do with his burgeoning reputation as a commercial artist. In 1966, he provided the cover illustrations for two popular Corgi collections of macabre short stories – The Cold Embrace and The Premature Burial – and in 1968 there were album covers for Grapefruit, Procol Harum and Tyrannosaurus Rex's debut, *My People Were Fair And Had Sky In Their Hair… But Now They're Content To Wear Stars On Their Brows*.

"That was thanks to David," recalls Underwood. "He recommended me to Marc Bolan and we sat in Tony Visconti's flat all together, listening to the album. Marc tried to explain the sort of 'cosmic' cover he wanted. Tolkien was mentioned and William Blake, so I had a flavour of what he wanted. I borrowed some images from Gustav Dore's Paradise Lost engravings plus some of my own ideas and Marc loved it."

Underwood would find Bowie himself a more exacting client. "David would always have a sketch for me to follow and he would talk me through the whole concept," says Underwood, who painted the phantasmagorical back cover of the 1969 *David Bowie* album. "I was interpreting David's ideas – trying to make them come to life."

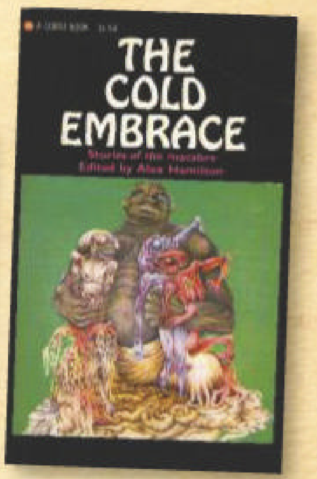
A case in point: the *Hunky Dory* cover. A photograph chosen by Bowie, with retouching masterminded by Underwood and executed by his colleague, Terry Pastor. "I was thinking that the airbrush might just give it a contemporary lift, together with the nostalgic Greta Garbo/Marlene Dietrich look," says Underwood. "Also, I told Terry not to do the obvious – you know, break the rules a little – which he did. When I showed it to David he was happy with it and was finishing off the hand-written back cover. I insisted Terry got a credit, hence the last-minute alterations."

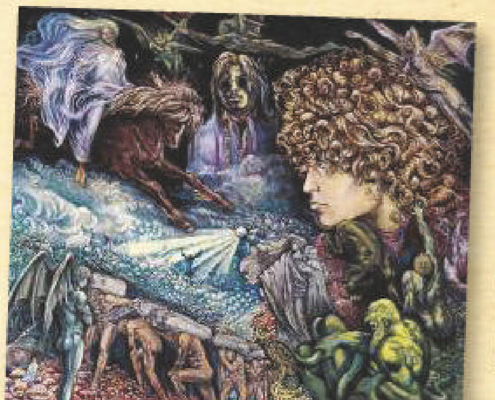
Later Underwood cover designs included another for Marc Bolan, T.Rex's *Futuristic Dragon* (1976) and The Fixx's *Reach The Beach* (1983) – "the first of many covers I did for them. The band were very easy to work with and I liked the music – that helps."

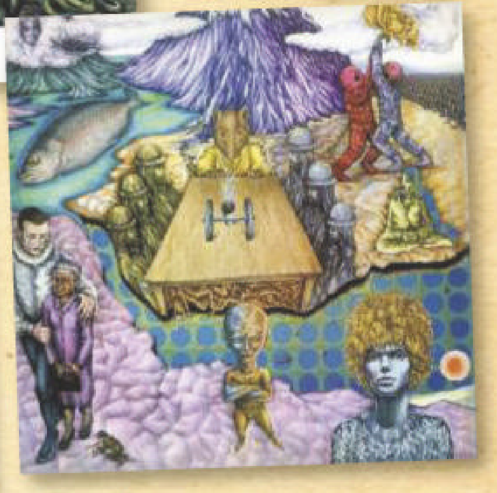
Today, Underwood continues to paint, and was recently the subject of a one man show entitled Looking For Clues at the Fosse Gallery in Gloucestershire. His latest work can be seen and enjoyed at georgeunderwood.com.

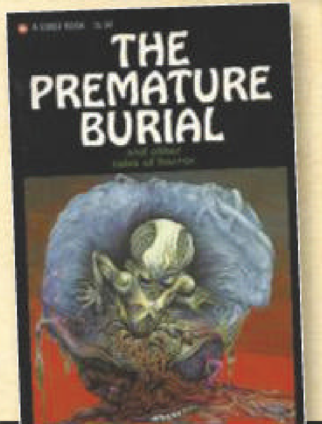
"My father used to say I had 'too much imagination'," notes Bowie's most long-standing collaborator.

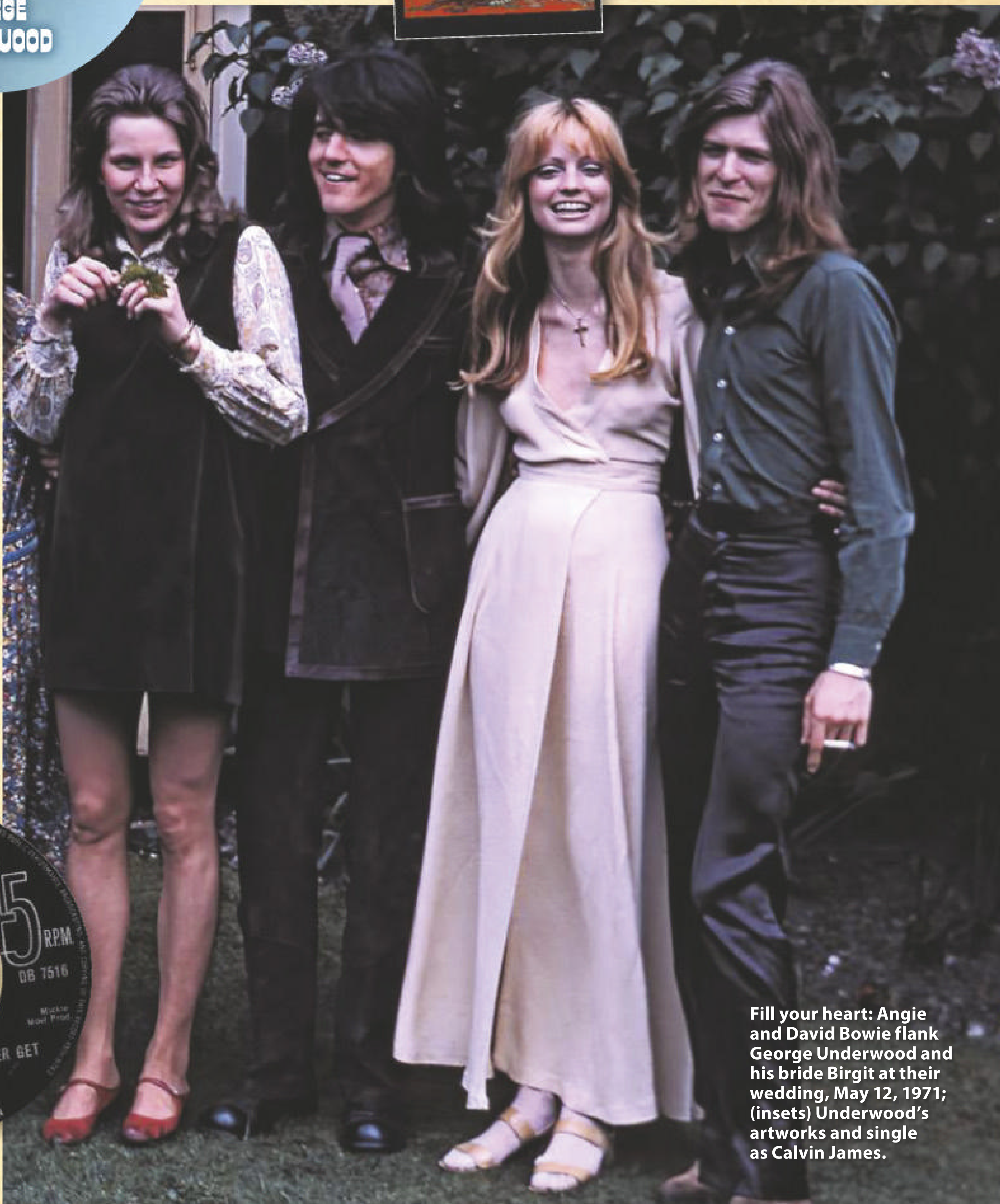
"I don't think you can have too much imagination. It's what the arts exist on."

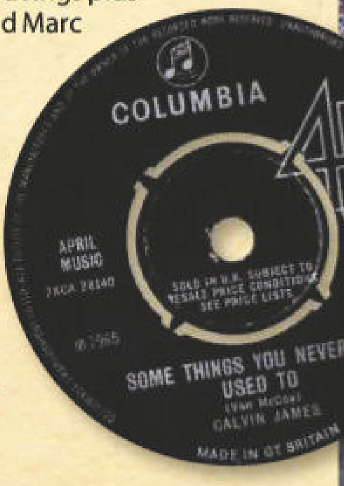







THE PREMATURE BURIAL
and other tales of horror





Fill your heart: Angie and David Bowie flank George Underwood and his bride Birgit at their wedding, May 12, 1971; (insets) Underwood's artworks and single as Calvin James.

Driving your mama and papa insane?: (from left) proud parents with Zowie, Haddon Hall, 1971; Rick Wakeman; Ken Scott; Bowie hanging on in there.

< Bolder fitted in perfectly, being an inventive, melodically-inclined player, though there were some tensions during the rehearsals, with Bowie at one point impatiently shouting at the bassist when he fluffed the changes in Song For Bob Dylan. "For Trevor, it was like, 'Learn 12 songs overnight and you're playing them tomorrow, live on John Peel,'" Woodmansey remembers. "And they weren't particularly easy songs, 'cos Bowie always had a few odd chords."

On the night, Bowie debuted various songs that were set to appear on *Hunky Dory*, including Queen Bitch and the freshly-written Kooks. The performance was billed as David Bowie And Friends, since it involved pals including Dana Gillespie and George Underwood. "He was very helpful to his friends," says the former. "He just wanted to give us all a bit of a gig."

During the broadcast, Underwood took the mike for Song For Bob Dylan. "David said he had written a song for me," he remembers. "We used to talk about Bob Dylan and wondered what he was really like, but I didn't expect David to write a song about it."

Next, Gillespie debuted a new up-tempo rocker with a skronky, Crazy Horse-ish arrangement, titled Andy Warhol, which Bowie had written especially for her. Introducing Gillespie, he told Peel, "She's a very, very excellent songwriter and she hasn't been recorded as yet with her compositions."

"Wrong," Gillespie laughs now. "I'd already had two albums out. I think he got flustered and said a lot of twaddle."

Bowie did indeed sound nervous on the air. Afterwards, as the performers enjoyed a post-show drink in the Captain's Cabin bar just off Piccadilly, he was in tears, believing he'd blown this high-profile opportunity. "He was in a real state," recalled Bob Grace, Bowie's A&R man at Chrysalis. "He thought his career was over."

"He hadn't really grabbed the reins," reckons Woodmansey. "It wasn't a musically together thing. It was more like a fucking circus act (*laughs*). But you could feel the potential within it."

Two-and-a-half weeks later, Bowie, Gillespie and Defries travelled down to the Glastonbury Fair where the singer was due to perform solo. Defries had advised against Bowie appearing, believing that his current profile would be unlikely to attract a decent audience at a disorganised, hippy-centric event.

"The whole idea of Glastonbury was based on the fact that it was supposedly the site of some particular mystical, mythical experience and if you built a stage in the form of a pyramid, you'd attract good vibrations," Defries laughs. "Now, when I hear stuff like that and I'm being asked, 'Should I do this?' My answer is, 'No, absolutely not.'"

The manager's suspicions that Glastonbury would be an ordeal were confirmed when the trio arrived at Castle Cary train station to discover that there wasn't a cab rank or even a public phone.

"So, we are obliged to walk to the field," says Defries. "David's miserable 'cos he's wearing a marvellous outfit, but it also includes [stack-heeled] boots that are very hard to walk in. When we arrive at the field and we start walking towards the stage, we immediately start sinking into what is essentially a field of mud."

On site, it became apparent that the bill – including Bowie, Hawkwind, Traffic, Fairport Convention and Melanie – had no set running order. Gillespie remembers Defries urging Bowie to forget it and go home. "David said, 'No, no, I want to perform,'" she says. "By this time, he was desperate to perform."

Having been vaguely scheduled to appear around 7pm on the evening of June 22, Bowie took the stage at around 5am the following dawn. Defries, in bed at a local hotel, missed his set. Gillespie watched it from the side of the stage. "People were just crawling out of their muddy tents," she recalls. "But David was very wise to have done Glastonbury."

As well as creating a future legend, Bowie's Glastonbury '71 set was also significant for being the very first time he performed Changes live.

"He always wanted to play his newest song immediately," says Defries. "It's like the latest toy in the basket, isn't it? (*laughs*)"

IN THE SUMMER OF '71, THE STREETS OF SOHO WERE typically abuzz. Tucked away in St Anne's Court, the alleyway linking Wardour and Dean Streets, Trident Studios was the recording facility *du jour*, having already been the scene of landmark recordings by The Beatles, Elton John and Marc Bolan, as well as the *David Bowie* and *The Man Who Sold The World* albums. For Rick Wakeman – fast becoming a top session keyboardist – Trident was like a second home.

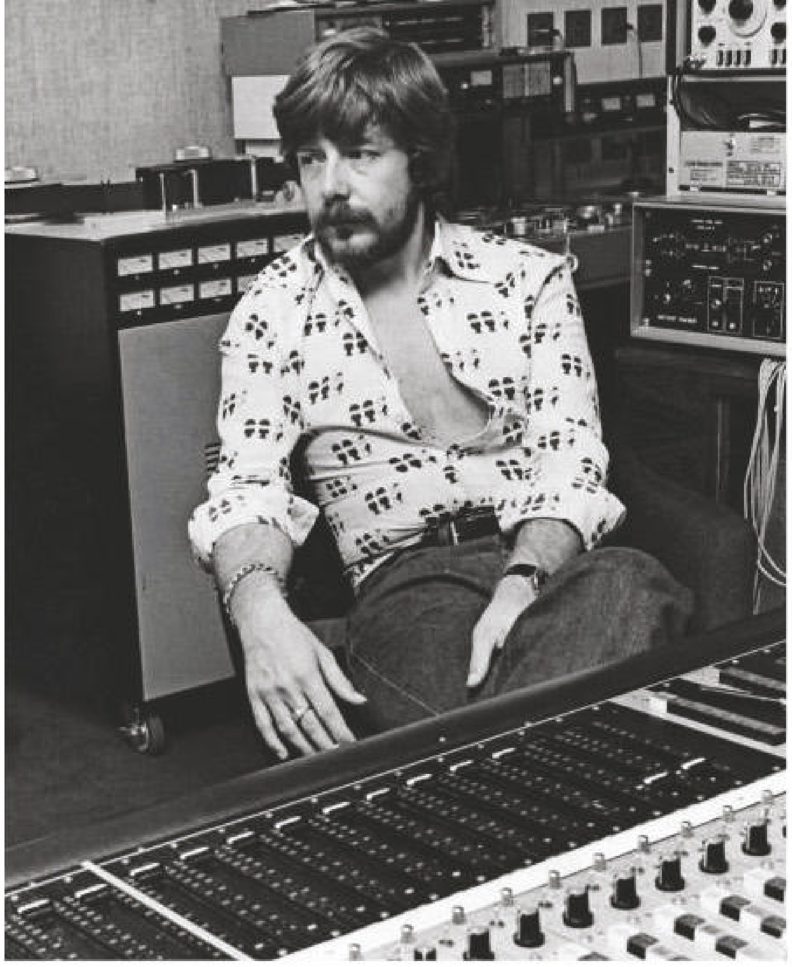
"At that time Wardour Street was films, music and ladies of, shall we say, the evening profession," Wakeman laughs today. "Trident Studios was unique. It had the famous Trident piano, which was a beautiful Bechstein. It had about three to four years of just being the piano that *everybody* wanted to play."

As you pushed open Trident's front door, passing its small control room which lay to the right behind its reception area, you'd walk down a set of stairs into its basement live room. Resident engineer Ken Scott, who had cut his teeth with The Beatles and worked on the previous two Bowie albums, was invited by the singer to co-produce *Hunky Dory*. Bowie was later to credit Scott as "my George Martin".

"Two songs into hearing the demos," Scott remembers now, "it was, 'My God, this is totally different from anything I've heard from him before. This could actually be huge.' We both went into the studio a little apprehensively because neither of us had done production ourselves."

"Ken's experience with The Beatles came out a lot," says Woodmansey. "Y'know, we were good players and we got good sounds,

Louanne Richards/Camera Press, Alamy, Getty, GEMA Archive/IconicPix



but it always sounded a little edgy or rough. Ken was good at getting the best out of each instrument and making it blend as one unit."

Like Neil Young and Bob Dylan, Bowie believed in capturing performances in as few takes as possible, ensuring freshness while keeping the musicians on their toes. Typically, Ronson, Bolder and Woodmansey had only run through a song once or twice at Haddon Hall before recording it at Trident.

"Or you'd get in on Monday and he'd finished another and nobody'd heard it," says the drummer. "He'd play it to us in the studio and we'd be going, 'Fucking hell, is there a middle eight? How many choruses does that repeat? How does it end?' He'd go, 'Ken, is it rolling?' And we'd be like, 'Oh fuck!' You were on a knife edge. Sometimes you didn't know what you'd done really until you went up to have a listen."

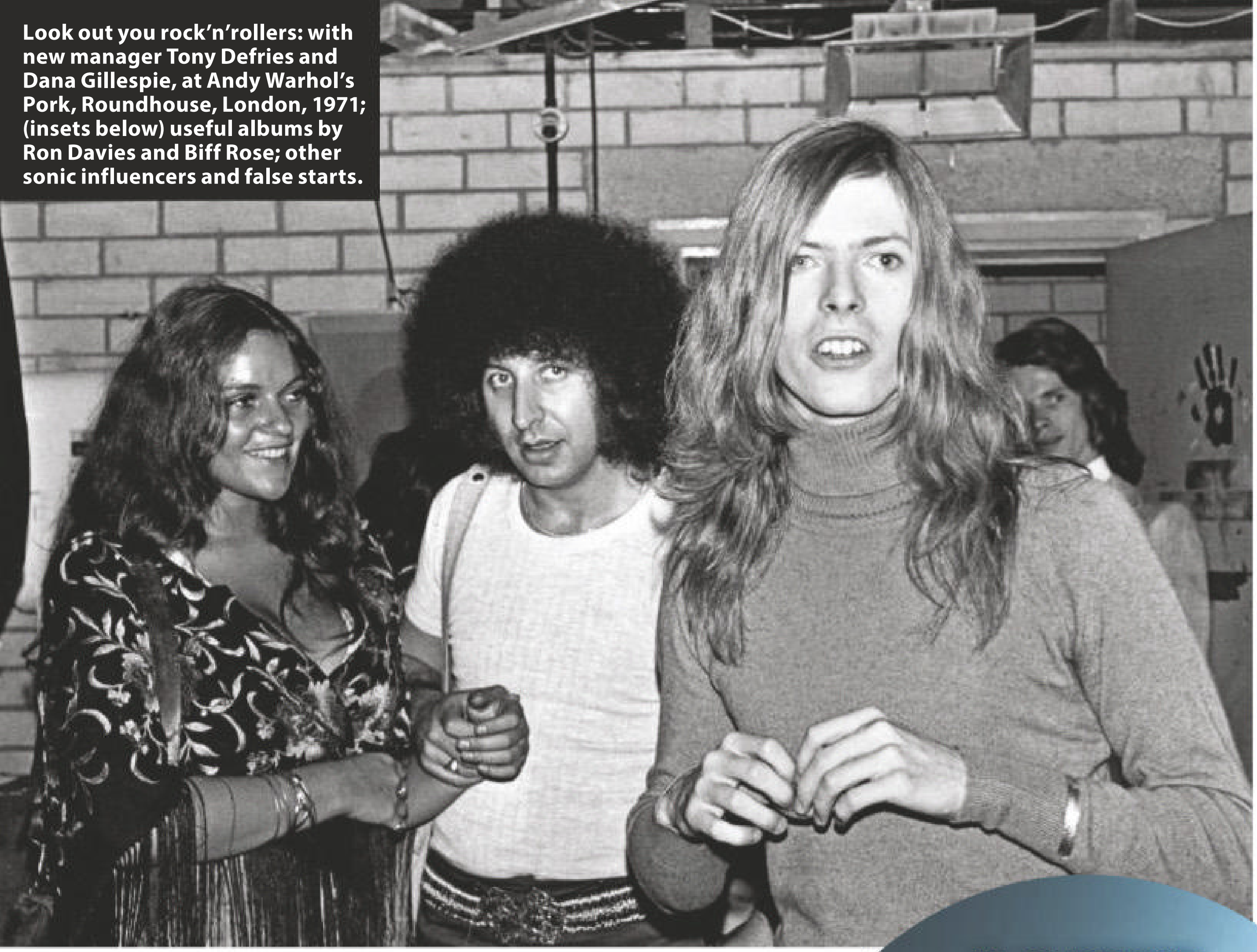
Overdubs would be similarly impromptu, Woodmansey found. "Bowie would go, 'That's it… let me put my acoustic on,' and he'd go down and he'd play his 12-string. Then he'd put his vocal on and the fucking thing would just take on this other dimension. Everything that we did was right. But not for a reason you could see at the time. Though *he* probably could."

One track, however, was already very familiar to Ronson and Woodmansey. The camp and catty Queen Bitch was a track that Bowie had lent to the guitarist and drummer to perform live with their own band, Ronno, in the early part of '71. "He said, 'Oh, did you play that one?'" Woodmansey recalls. "We went, 'Yeah', and we played him it, and he went, 'Ooh fuck, we're doing that. I'm having that back.'"

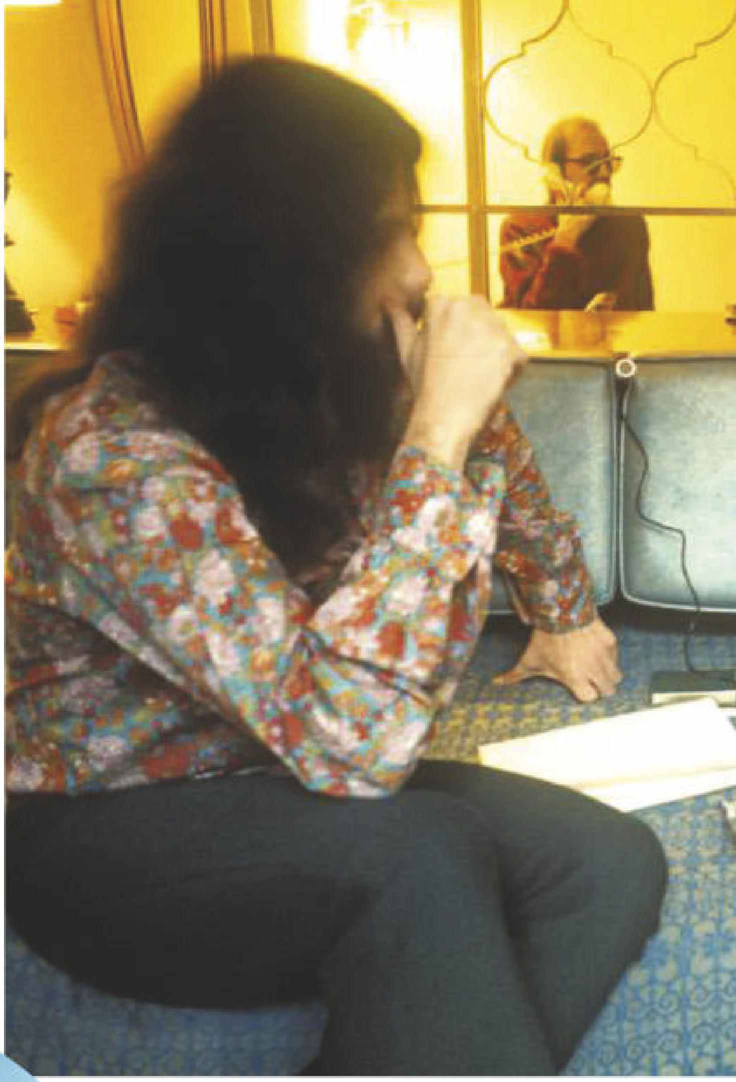
The louche gait of Queen Bitch may have been borrowed from The Velvet Underground (acknowledged by Bowie in *Hunky Dory*'s hand-scribbled back cover notes: "White Light returned with thanks"), but the arpeggio riff of his own strident acoustic ➢

"DAVID HAD THIS ALMOST CHILDLIKE WAY OF APPEALING TO PEOPLE. OF SAYING, 'LOOK, I NEED HELP.' I CALL IT THE 'DYING SWAN'."

TONY DEFRIES



Look out you rock'n'rollers: with new manager Tony Defries and Dana Gillespie, at Andy Warhol's Pork, Roundhouse, London, 1971; (insets below) useful albums by Ron Davies and Biff Rose; other sonic influencers and false starts.



rendering of Andy Warhol was in fact, barring the odd note or two, a direct steal from the title track of US country rocker Ron Davies's 1970 album *Silent Song Through The Land*. Perhaps as recompense, the band recorded Davies's It Ain't Easy from the same LP during the *Hunky Dory* sessions, though it was shelved, later to appear on *The Rise And Fall Of Ziggy Stardust And The Spiders From Mars*.

> "I SUPPOSE I'M A DISILLUSIONED OLD ROCKER. I'M SURE THAT IF I'D MADE IT, I WOULD'VE ADORED IT ALL – THE GOLD LAMÉ AND EVERYTHING."
> DAVID BOWIE

Hunky Dory's sole cover version would instead be the curiously ecstatic Fill Your Heart, from the 1968 album *The Thorn In Mrs Rose's Side* by New Orleans singer-songwriter Biff Rose, whose yearning, pitch-bending vocal delivery was a clear influence on Bowie's current singing style, not least in Oh! You Pretty Things and Eight Line Poem.

For the most part, minimalism in the arrangements was the new approach, with Woodmansey citing both *After The Gold Rush* and *John Lennon/Plastic Ono Band* as production templates. Ken Scott, meanwhile, was channelling his own work on George Harrison's *All Things Must Pass*, recorded the previous year at Trident. When it came to arranging the acoustic guitars on *Hunky Dory*'s beautiful hymn to over-rumination, Quicksand, he instructed Bowie to overdub his original part an additional four times, before sculpting them in the mix.

"I had a very specific idea that I wanted it to be one guitar for a bit," says the co-producer. "Then, at a certain point, change to two. Then I wanted it to be really big *à la All Things Must Pass*, and then back down to one. So, it has movement. It's kind of like the acoustic is living."

Ron Davies / Silent Song Through the Land
the thorn in MRS ROSE'S side
BIFF ROSE
GEORGE HARRISON
ALL THINGS MUST PASS
PHILIPS
45
DISQUES
FLECHE
EP
CLAUDE FRANÇOIS
COMME D'HABITUDE

IF A SONG HAS COME TO EPITOMISE what is unique about *Hunky Dory* – what is unique about Bowie full stop – it is Life On Mars? Tantalisingly enigmatic but filled with a paradoxically passionate ennui, it regularly vies for Number 1 in lists of his greatest songs. But the first great showstopper of the singer's catalogue was originally rooted in a grudge: Bowie was miffed that his proposed 1968 English language lyric for Jacques Revaux's Comme D'Habitude melody, titled Even A Fool Learns To Love, was unused and forgotten after Paul Anka wrote his My Way lyric and sold it to Sinatra.

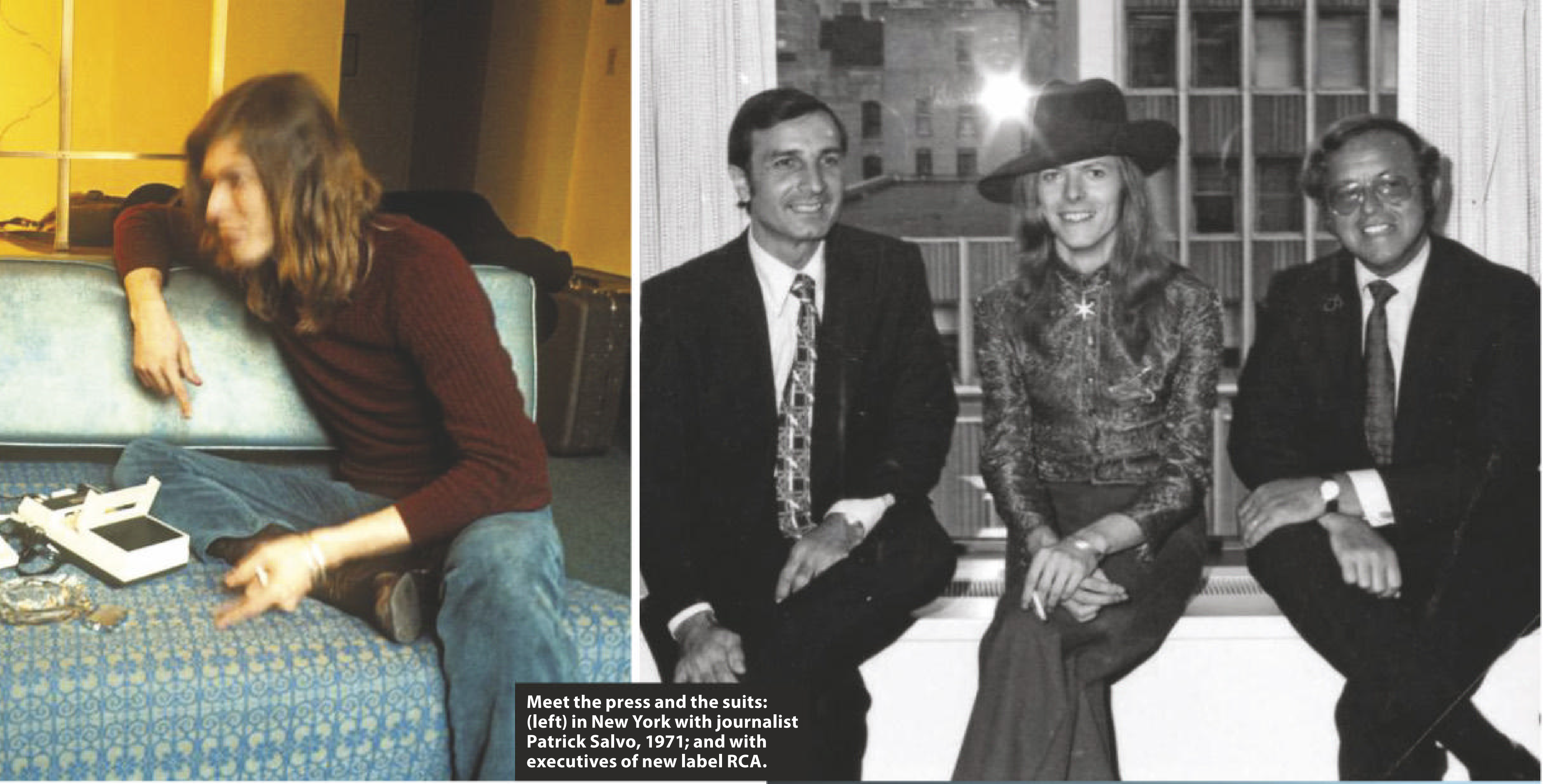
That experience gave crucial creative impetus. In another of his *Hunky Dory* back cover annotations, Bowie noted that Life On Mars? was "inspired by Frankie".

When it came to the arrangement, Bowie knew he needed something different. At Haddon Hall, he told Rick Wakeman to treat his piano contribution almost as a solo piece, but the instruction came in the form of a head game. "I said, 'Well, how do you want me to play it?'" Wakeman recollects. "He said, 'You know how I want you to play it.' I said, 'Well, I don't. That's why I'm asking you how to play it.' He said, 'You *do* know how I want you to play it. Play it.' So, I played it, and he said, '*That's* how I want you to play it.'"

On the studio floor at Trident, as Woodmansey recalls, Life On Mars? was a full-band live take involving himself, Ronson, Bolder and Wakeman. "Fucking hell, it sounded outstanding," he enthuses today. "With Rick playing, it made everybody put an extra bit [of effort] in as well. I played it really heavy."

Bowie's second key decision was to ask Ronson to orchestrate the track. The guitarist had studied piano and violin as a boy and could read and write music, and now worked out the parts on his Gibson Les Paul before transferring them to charts. When the BBC string players

Courtesy Tony DeFries/Mainman label, Jeffrey Mayer, Courtesy Sony archives



Meet the press and the suits: (left) in New York with journalist Patrick Salvo, 1971; and with executives of new label RCA.

turned up at Trident, Ronson was quietly terrified to be acting as their conductor, though masked it with coolness, taking his time rolling a cigarette. After the first take, the musicians were so impressed by the arrangement that they asked if they could try a second one.

"Mick said, (*breezily*) 'Yeah, all right then,'" laughs Woodmansey. "Bowie and I were going, 'Don't roll another ciggie, Mick, for fuck's sake.' Then they did it and it was even fucking better."

As the orchestra played the final note, a previous band take, which had been spoiled at the end by a ringing telephone, cut back in on the master tape. The payphone in the live room at Trident was used by session musicians calling out; no one ever called in. When Bowie and Scott made the decision to keep it in the final mix, it became the wrong number call that echoed around the world, adding an extra layer of mystique to the track.

But if Life On Mars? was a puzzle, more puzzling was the song that would close the album in an unsettling fug. Ken Scott is firm in his opinion that The Bewlay Brothers – rich in seeming symbolism – was at least half a joke. "There was a lot of talk back then about how the Americans would read something into anything," he notes today. "And David said the song was written for that."

It's plausible, however, that Bowie was underplaying what was sensitive in a lyric he'd describe, in a 1972 US radio interview, as "so personal". Singing it, he is audibly invested, and it's hard not to hear, in one or two lines ("Now my brother lays upon the rocks/He could be dead, he could be not"), his fears for his schizophrenic half-brother Terry Burns, while varisped voices borrowed from *The Man Who Sold The World*'s All The Madmen fuel its disassociative ambience. At the time of the song's creation, Terry was moving between Haddon Hall and Cane Hill psychiatric hospital in south London. He would finally commit suicide in 1985.

Ken Scott remains to be convinced. "I've heard eight, nine different versions of what the song is about from people," he says. "I know David would've agreed with every single one of them. Like, 'Yeah, you're right, you've got it.'"

Adding a fresh layer of intrigue, Tony Defries insists to MOJO that The Bewlay Brothers was about his and Bowie's relationship.

"That's David and I," he states. "The 'stone' and the 'wax'… Like stone, I didn't ever change my position with David. I was always his biggest supporter, while he was often uncertain what was going to happen next."

TONY DEFRIES MANAGED TO FREE DAVID BOWIE FROM his Mercury Records contract in May and, with *Hunky Dory* completed by August, the search for a new deal was on. The manager, in cahoots with his partner Laurence Myers at the ➢

INCEST! MURDER! AND MOTORS?!

IN 1971, EVEN DAVID BOWIE'S OUTTAKES WERE INTERESTING, WRITES DAVID BUCKLEY.

RIGHT ON MOTHER

Written in early 1971, and recorded by Peter Noone, this piano-based song (think Martha My Dear Beatles, even Gilbert O'Sullivan) was demoed by Bowie but never properly finished. The story of a man coming of age and informing his mother that he has moved in with his girlfriend, the lyric contains a serious twist (a liaison between empowered son and curious mother is indicated).

RUPERT THE RILEY

The subject here is Bowie's car (a Riley Gamecock), in an unreleased song recorded at Trident during April 1971 under the guise of The Nick King All Stars, with Bowie sharing vocals. This is glorious David Bowie, very silly of mood and catchy of song, complete with "Zoom beep beep/Beep beep" hook, and "Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah."

THE SHADOWMAN

Remade by Bowie for the unreleased *Toy* project in 2001, and with a melody reminiscent of the Bee Gees' To Love Somebody, this was seriously considered for official release with a final version recorded at Trident on September 14, 1971. It visits themes that would dominate Bowie's writing in the '70s, the attraction/repulsion of creating another version of himself.

LIGHTNING FRIGHTENING (AKA I'VE GOT LIGHTENING)

Although included on Ryko's 1990 reissue of *The Man Who Sold The World*, this song dates from a slightly later period, probably spring 1971. With its slovenly, proto-slacker beat, slide guitar, harmonica, sax and guitar solos and vague lyrics about giving back his farmland and his "right to be free", this is a hokey Bowie pretending he's in The Band or Crazy Horse.

HOW LUCKY YOU ARE (AKA MISS PECULIAR)

Recorded in April 1971 at Trident, this is a piano-dominated, Teutonic sing-along in 3/4 time, and shows Bowie bringing the German influence into his music significantly before the cocaine kicked in. The obtusely creepy lyric about control and surveillance of his lover was one Bowie obviously thought better discarded.

LOOKING FOR A FRIEND

In early 1971, Bowie's music was becoming more and more Americanised, and this country-rock song is pleasingly catchy enough but hardly an indicator of the greatness to come. Bowie is in a lonely mood, desperate to make friends, it seems with just about anyone, yet even the women are "too busy having babies" to chum up.

BOMBERS

Like Running Gun Blues from *The Man Who Sold The World* and much later, 2013's Valentine's Day, Bombers is a cheery song about killing people. Dropped from *Hunky Dory*, the bizarre tale tells of the decision to bomb a wasteland inhabited by a single occupant, an old man, who unhelpfully refuses to budge. Bowie's vocals are strained, the mood faux-jolly. Misjudged but still an earworm.

MISSING IN ACTION: Tracks known to exist from 1971 but still uncirculated include Cream cover I Feel Free; It's Gonna Rain Again; Only One Paper Left; Don't Be Afraid; Something Happens; Black Hole Kids. Songs demoed/written in 1971 include: King Of The City (almost certainly an earlier version of Suffragette City); Here She Comes (changed to Song For Bob Dylan); We Should Be On By Now (later redone, on 1973's *Aladdin Sane*, as Time).

"I SAID TO DAVID, 'IF YOU WANT TO BE A STAR, YOU HAVE TO BEHAVE LIKE A STAR. DON'T GO OUT IN PUBLIC WITHOUT BEING THAT PERSONA.'"
TONY DEFRIES

DAVID BOWIE
ZIGGY STARDUST
K.WEST

Don't give up the day job: caving in on the coving, Bowie decorates Haddon Hall, April 24, 1972; (inset) *Ziggy Stardust*, follow-up and breakthrough.

⮜ GEM production company, had financed the making of *Hunky Dory* independently. Now, he had 500 private press LPs manufactured, featuring seven Bowie tracks on side one and five by Dana Gillespie on side two (including her own version of Andy Warhol). Defries started booking meetings with labels.

"There wasn't an avalanche of interest," he admits. "There was, 'OK, Bowie is promising. He's interesting but he's not the most interesting thing on the menu at this point.' That was the reaction we were getting from record companies."

Boldly, Defries took the promos to America. In the midst of this indefinite business activity, Bowie gave an interview to Sounds, published on August 14. Even with *Hunky Dory* in the can, he sounded defeated, as if his hopes of success already lay in the past. "I suppose I'm a disillusioned old rocker," he self-pityingly mused. "I'm sure that if I'd made it, I would've adored it all – all that gold lamé and everything. It would've been fabulous."

In New York, RCA emerged as the frontrunner to sign Bowie, for a three-album, two-year deal, worth $112,500. The singer flew first class to the States on September 8, staying in the same suite at Manhattan's Warwick Hotel where The Beatles had set up camp when playing Shea Stadium six years before. "It made everyone think that he was a star before he'd become one," says Dana Gillespie. "A great ploy."

"Yeah, it was a deliberate ploy," Defries admits. "Because nobody in America knew who David was. I said to him, 'If you want to be a star, you have to behave like a star.' I used to say, 'Don't go out in public without being that persona.'"

On September 9, the day Bowie signed the deal, he, Angie and Tony Defries walked the few blocks from the Warwick to RCA's office on Sixth Avenue, the manager insisting it would be quicker, since a cab would have to navigate Manhattan's one-way system to get there. "David and Angela start to complain that they've got to walk," Defries remembers. "So, I stopped them in the street, and I said, 'Look, enjoy this, because you're walking down a street in New York, and nobody notices you and nobody bothers you. You're not being mobbed. You won't be able to do this in a few years' time. This is the most fun you're gonna have. Right now.'"

The next day, Bowie's obscurity was brought home to him again on a visit to the Factory, downtown in Union Square, to meet Andy Warhol. He was famously filmed there performing awkward mime pieces and had brought along the *Hunky Dory* recording of his Warhol tribute to play for its subject.

"He starts to play it and Andy leaves the room," Defries recalls. "Andy wasn't interested in other people unless he was interested in them as *people*. If they were just there to try and sell him something, he wasn't interested.

"He comes back after the record is played to all of us and then he says to David, 'I like your shoes.' David's wearing this pair of bright lemon yellow, shiny patent leather, what they used to call Mary Janes, that little children used to wear to school. That's all Andy says to David Bowie in their historic meeting (*laughs*). 'I like your shoes.'"

RELEASED ON DECEMBER 17, 1971, *HUNKY DORY*'S striking sleeve featured a sepia shot by photographer Brian Ward of Bowie in a Garboesque pose, which the singer had asked George Underwood to colourise. Underwood employed the airbrush artist partner at his Main Artery design studio, Terry Pastor.

"The seed was sown after David had seen a hand-tinted photo of my mother which used to hang on the wall in the front room where we used to rehearse together," Underwood explains. "That photo fascinated him."

Nine days before *Hunky Dory* arrived in the record shops, the sessions for *The Rise And Fall Of Ziggy Stardust And The Spiders From Mars* had kicked off at Trident. Defries believed that a swiftly-recorded follow-up would further bolster support for Bowie at RCA.

"My vision was, 'Let's make David a global superstar,'" he avers. "Not just an English star, not just an American star, but a global superstar who can sell millions of records for RCA."

Six months later, it was clear the plan was coming to fruition. *Hunky Dory* initially struggled to sell more than 5,000 copies in the UK, after Changes bafflingly flopped as a single. But following the Top 10 success of *Ziggy Stardust* in the summer of 1972, in September *Hunky Dory* charted even higher, hitting Number 3.

"For me," says Woody Woodmansey, "*Hunky Dory* was Bowie going, 'I'll show you I can fucking write. Give me an elastic band between my fingers and teeth and I'll write you a hit.'"

"It's an album that ticks every box," Rick Wakeman concludes. "Great songs, great playing. Albums in general back then had a couple of great songs, three or four good songs, and then you'd have three or four fillers that nobody ever played. *Hunky Dory* was *all* great. It was just a matter of which song was greater. And that's what made it unique."

Hunky Dory is arguably a blip, albeit an utterly exquisite one, in the Bowie canon, an immersion in classic songwriting between the futuristic hard rock of *The Man Who Sold The World* and the futuristic glam rock of *Ziggy Stardust*. Yet it has a glamour of its own – a touch of Broadway in its rich harmonic sweep, and of old Hollywood in its cinematic scope – plus a warmth arising from Bowie's feelings for its dedicatees: Warhol, Dylan, Zowie, Terry (maybe).

"I remember speaking to people at the time," says Wakeman, "and I said, 'It will be one of the greatest albums ever made. This album will be around long after all of us are dead.'

"And it is, and it will be." Ⓜ

Getty

MOJO FILTER

YOUR GUIDE TO THE MONTH'S BEST MUSIC

EDITED BY **JENNY BULLEY** jenny.bulley@bauermedia.co.uk

HEART-SHAPED SCARS
Allison
VILLAGERS
FEVER DREAMS
THE BEACH BOYS
The Beach Boys
FLOWS
's Up Sessions · 1969 - 1971
PSALMS ♥ NATHAN SALSBURG
alice
LTRANE

CONTENTS

76 ALBUMS
- Villagers' mind-melting return
- The human touch of Jackson Browne
- Nathan Salsburg gets in the spirit
- Dot Allison's world of wicca
- Plus, Los Lobos, John McLaughlin, Martha Wainwright, Rodney Crowell, Big Youth, Torres, Susanna Wallumrød, Big Big Train and more.

90 REISSUES
- The Beach Boys in the '70s: everything flows
- Ideal gnome: *All Things Must Pass* at 50
- An unexpected belter by Prince
- An overlooked masterpiece from Lewis Taylor
- Plus, Alice Coltrane, P.J. Harvey, Thin Lizzy, Juana Molina, Scritti Politti, Mose Allison, Karen Black, John Renbourn, Maggie Bell and more.

100 HOW TO BUY
- Anarchist, psychiatric nurse, bluesman and painter, Kevin Coyne.

103 SCREEN
- The story of The Sparks Brothers, told by their many celebrity friends and fans.

104 BOOKS
- Philip Norman adds to Hendrix's legend. Plus, Sinéad O'Connor, Willie Nelson and more.

> "His milkman once decorated Hendrix's Marble Arch flat"
>
> **WHY WE NEED ANOTHER JIMI BIOG. MARK BLAKE, PAGE 104**

INDEX

Alex Rex **85**
Alexander, Jeffery **86**
Allison, Dot **80**
Allison, Mose **98**
Anika **81**
Balimaya Project **87**
Beach Boys, The **90**
Bell, Maggie **95**
Big Big Train **87**
Black, Karen **97**
'Blue' Gene Tyranny **98**
Blunt, Dean **84**
Brain Damage Meets Big Youth **81**
Browne, Jackson **84**
Bruntnell, Peter **82**
Bush, Raven **83**
Chapman, Roger **81**
Chua, Lucinda **78**
Clarke, Josienne **85**
Collier, Isaiah **81**
Coltrane, Alice **95**
Cots **87**
Crowell, Rodney **78**
Darkside **86**
Eckman, Chris **85**
Flynn, John Francis **85**
Frizzell, Lefty **95**
GA-20 **82**
Gillespie, Dana **82**
Harrison, George **96**
Harvey P.J. & John Parish **92**
Heads, The **98**
Helicopter Of The Holy Ghost, The **83**
Hodges, James, Smith & Crawford **92**
Horsey **86**
Ishmael Ensemble **85**
Jungle **81**
Jupp, Mickey **95**
K.D.A.P. **84**
Kemp, Gary **78**
'Kingfish' Ingram, Christone **82**
Koreless **83**
Krgovich, Nicholas **83**
Liars **83**
Lightning Bug **83**
Lingua Ignota **86**
Los Lobos **78**
Lounge At The Edge Of Town **82**
Mansell, Clint **87**
Manzanita **98**
Mason, Willy **87**
McLaughlin, John **78**
Mega Bog **81**
Moketsi, Kippie & Singer, Hal **99**
Molina, Juana **92**
Morgan, Lee **97**
Muldaur, Maria **84**
Pachyman **82**
Parr, Charlie **81**
Prince **93**
Renbourn, John **92**
Rendell, Don **99**
Robbing Millions **86**
Rubinoos, The **97**
Salsburg, Nathan **79**
Scritti Politti **98**
Setzer, Brian **92**
Son Volt **85**
Sylvia **99**
Taylor, Lewis **94**
Torres **86**
Tremolo Beer Gut, The **86**
Triptides **84**
VA Choctaw Ridge **95**
VA Fire Over Babylon **92**
VA More Motown Girls **97**
VA Journeys In Modern Jazz Britain **97**
VA Modern Love **87**
VA Music From The Arab World Pt 2 **97**
VA Rip It Up **92**
VA Harmonic Series II **78**
Villagers **76**
Wainwright, Martha **78**
Wallumrød, Susanna & David **82**
Whatever, The **98**
Whispers, The **97**
Wiffen, David **98**
Williams, Deniece **95**
Winer, Leslie **95**

The surreal McCoy

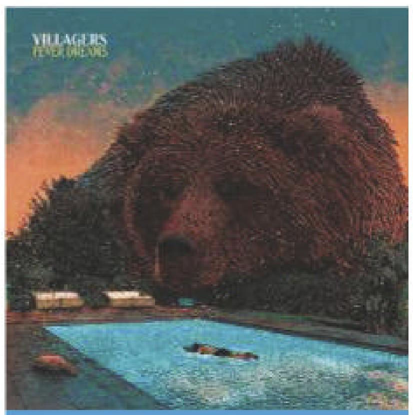
Conor O'Brien's new set of heavenly melodies and "agnostic devotionals" are enough to melt **Danny Eccleston**'s mind. Illustration by **Jon Berkeley.**

Villagers

★★★★

Fever Dreams

DOMINO. CD/DL/LP



IT'S NOT ALL Conor O'Brien's fault if he's perceived as a Connoisseurs' Choice kind of artist. An Ivor Novello award – very much the songwriter's songwriter accolade – for 2010's Becoming A Jackal, his first single as Villagers, set the trend. An Ivor for an entire album, 2015's *Darling Arithmetic*, was to follow. Here's a musician with chops his peers envy – Paul Weller once made O'Brien sign a Villagers album for him – and a writer skilled at pinning melody to a free-flowing stream of lofty ideas and sophisticated vocabulary. He's an Elvis Costello *de nos jours*. So why isn't he a household name?

Perhaps there's a categorisation issue. In the first line of its entry on Villagers, the ever reliable Wikipedia has them down as "an Irish indie folk project from Dublin, created in 2008". Whatever images that creates in the reader's mind, it's unlikely to correlate with O'Brien's actual output, which is generically fluid and texturally diverse, the one common denominator being the sweetly stoic, slightly hurt treble of his singing. The single thing that justifies the 'f' word is the regular employment of an acoustic guitar.

Alamy

BACK STORY: DEFINITELY PERHACS

- Conor O'Brien speaks of an epiphany at Another Love Story, County Meath's boutique music festival, in 2019. He returned with loved-up vibes and started work on some "electronica with soul" that evolved into ecstatic *Fever Dreams* track The First Day.

It was also a lockdown broadcast for Another Love Story by O'Brien's writer friend Siobhán Kane, and recorded off the 'net by the singer, that provided the mystical spoken word section at the centre of *Fever Dreams*' swirling title track: "I saw a figure – was it an angel? – and I knew that my true role was love." The words turn out to be from an interview by Kane with psychedelic folk pioneer Linda Perhacs (pictured). "I pitched Siobhán's voice down," explains O'Brien, a little guiltily, "which she wasn't very happy about!"

In fact, Villagers albums have ranged widely, swinging between more organic, band-based outings and more oddball, studio-ised creations epitomised by second LP *{Awayland}* – MOJO Album Of The Month in 2013, a record influenced by O'Brien's failed attempts to make a techno record and superseding another whim to make an album entirely of instrumentals.

Fever Dreams started a similarly long way from where it ended up, with full band sessions in a makeshift studio in Dublin in 2019. O'Brien's band of three years' standing – Ross Turner on drums, Danny Snow on bass, Kevin Corcoran and Brendan Jenkinson on keys – were road hardened and it was an assurance he hoped to capture. The material was only half-written; O'Brien wanted it to evolve. But the last booked day of the final session became the first day of lockdown in Ireland and O'Brien retreated to the attic of his Dublin flat and proceeded, in his own words, to go "a bit insane for a year and a half".

This edge of madness – a sense of a record that has stewed in itself, fermented, and re-emerged in a surreal form its creator had not planned – is a large part of what makes *Fever Dreams* the free-est, fun-est, most psychedelic Villagers record so far. Everything feels a bit warped. Acoustic guitars and voices are varisped, melty-sounding. Songs suddenly strike off in joyously unexpected directions. A guitar solo appears from space. Influences as diverse as Robert Wyatt, Alice Coltrane and library music maestro Piero Umiliani meet. "I was trying to get away from preciousness," O'Brien tells MOJO, and he has.

> "Everything feels a bit warped. Songs strike off in unexpected directions."

But if that makes *Fever Dreams* sound like an album of textures and not of songs it would be misleading. The First Day starts with wobbly voice and piano aping the wow and flutter of an ancient gramophone and takes off with big, fritzing drums like Steve Drozd's on *The Soft Bulletin* – but then it's all about a heavenly melody, carried by glockenspielish synth, blithe brass and O'Brien's voice, singing "feels like snowflake, feels like sunshine" like he's never felt either before.

It's only the first in a run of memorable and addictive tunes. Song In Seven is like taking a warm bath in sound – warmer, surely, than the nocturnal dip in the North Sea (with Ursa Major twinkling above) the lyric recounts. So Simpatico is an ecstatic mix of Burt Bacharach and *What's Going On*, with O'Brien's spoken interventions like Marvin on Save The Children. Momentarily – a slow jam about love's redemptive power and its limits – is a sweet ache that sets in the bones.

In each case you're struck by a new economy in O'Brien's lyrics. A writer who's tended to load his songs with the fruits of his erudition has learned, at the age of 37, to pare back. When we spoke around *{Awayland}*, O'Brien was full to the brim with sci-fi sage Kurt Vonnegut and cosmologist Neil deGrasse Tyson. Today, he gets more excited about Charles Wright & The 103rd Street Rhythm Band. "As you get older," he tells MOJO, "you realise that music is where you need to go for the joy rather than the dread, the existential questioning."

But this is 2021, and joy cannot be unconfined. O'Brien, who grew up in a churchgoing Catholic home during the first flush of revelations of institutional abuse and cover-up, is an agnostic, interested in exploring what he terms "the agnostic devotional" and troubled by the modern trend toward entrenching political and intellectual positions rather than opening them up for discussion. He's taken to bingeing vintage TV talk shows – William F. Buckley's Firing Line and Channel 4's once-notorious After Dark – now revealed as paradigms of pluralism. Out of that experience comes Circles In The Firing Line, with its forces of conflict and paranoia "fucking up my favourite dream". A product of O'Brien's attic sessions, it evokes the shouting-match of modern discourse with its collage of incongruent parts: an invasion of electronic squiggle, a full-fat guitar solo and a surprising boogie outro, with screaming.

And yet *Fever Dreams* isn't 'about' modern malaises – or at least, only a bit. An alternate universe glimpsed from O'Brien's attic, it's also an escape that finds beautiful things to fixate on – that "agnostic devotional" again. The title track, with its music-box melody, ends in a woozy mantra of meshing voices intoning "the more I know, the more I care" – the album's working title, says O'Brien. It melts (that word again) into the exquisite Deep In My Heart, the opiated show tune that brings the curtain down on *Fever Dreams* in spectacular fashion. In it, O'Brien drinks deep of someone's "moonshine soul remedy". The song, too, is a magically simple brew; the philosophical callisthenics of earlier Villagers records remain on hold.

Whether this is the future for O'Brien's music – one built on grooves and vibes and soul as much as words and ideas – remains to be seen. But it's a wonderful present.

Los Lobos Native Sons

Los Lobos

★★★★

Native Sons

NEW WEST. CD/DL/LP

Pin Ups en Español: East LA's greatest dance band hosts a 'covers' party.

As a band that started out at neighbourhood weddings and parties, then crashed the mainstream playing Ritchie Valens hits, Los Lobos are established masters of the fine art of hijacking other artists' songs to their own, jubilant ends. *Native Sons* adds a local twist as Los Lobos roll back – with new, inventive detail – through their LA roots and influences, binding the Chicano branch of '60s rock (Thee Midniters, The Premiers), Central Avenue R&B (Percy Mayfield's Never No More) and California from the other side of town (The Beach Boys, Jackson Browne). Los Chucos Suaves ("The Smooth Boys") comes swinging in from a 1949 78 by Lalo Guerrero; Dave Alvin's Flat Top Joint evokes Los Lobos's early family affair with roots rockers The Blasters. And East LA goes to the Fillmore in a long, acid-Santana ride through The World Is A Ghetto with history coming full circle: Thee Midniters' Little Willie G reprising his guest vocal on War's 1972 original.

David Fricke

Gary Kemp

★★★

Insolo

COLUMBIA. CD/DL/LP

Spandau Ballet songwriter and Saucerful Of Secrets singer's second solo album.

Kemp's belated follow-up to 1995's solo debut opens with a dramatic blast: the title track is a six-minute, filmic epic about loneliness in the big city. Written as a series of scenes with a grand, string-laden production, it recalls Scott Walker in the late '60s. Nothing else is quite as ambitious on this introspective album whose key song seems to be Waiting For The Band, which describes a teenage fan's excitement at seeing his hero (David Bowie, apparently). Gary Kemp actually sings Bowie-like on the lovely I Am The Past. Mostly the feel is 1970s-80s AOR, lushly upholstered and hook-laden. The George Michael-ish I Remember You is another bittersweet highlight that Radio 2 daytime producers will fight over. Kemp has lately fronted Nick Mason's Saucerful Of Secrets band, but anyone expecting echoes of wayward genius/madman Syd Barrett amid *Insolo*'s smooth contours will be disappointed.

John Bungey

MARTHA WAINWRIGHT
Love will be reborn

Martha Wainwright

★★★★

Love Will Be Reborn

COOKING VINYL. CD/DL/LP

A fine document of difficult divorce and new romance.

Produced by Pierre Marchand, overseer of brother Rufus's landmark *Poses*, *Love Will Be Reborn* sounds hard-won and truly inspired, as Martha Wainwright's spectacularly unguarded vocal displays trounce a recent period of writer's block. No gauche self-pity here; rather adult pain expressed with frank acuity, hence Getting Older and Report Card, the latter a weightless, gin-soused evocation of empty-room loneliness. The fearless, untethered arrangements enchant (see the treated guitar textures and pulsing bells of Being Right), and as so often before we sense Wainwright/McGarrigle DNA digging at uncomfortable truths. There is nothing less appetising than a break-up album that lacks artistry, but Wainwright's fifth LP has artistry galore: spacious ballad Justice conjures Kate Bush circa *The Kick Inside*, while Body And Soul unspools its deft melodies magically.

James McNair

Various

★★★★

The Harmonic Series II

IMPORTANT. DL/LP

Second epic bout of Duane Pitre's curated masterclass in just intonation.

It's now 13 years since Volume One of Duane Pitre's Harmonic Series, which featured just intonation works by Ellen Fullman & Theresa Wong, Michael Harrison, Pauline Oliveros, and Charles Curtis. Since then, the audience for performers of this rich, ancient music has grown significantly, thanks to the increased popularity of artists such as Oliveros and Terry Riley but also the arrival of young female composers such as Kali Malone and Sarah Davachi composing in this resonant 'natural' style. Pitre's second compilation brings together side-long works by Malone, Catherine Lamb, Tashi Wada, Byron Westbrook, and Caterina Barbieri, and from Malone's shimmering, immersive Pipe Inversions to Barbieri's brooding synthesizer composition Firmamento the mood is epic, peaceful, complex and vast. An ecstatic sextet of shimmering micro-tonal beauty that is simultaneously impossible to theorise on and impossible to resist.

Andrew Male

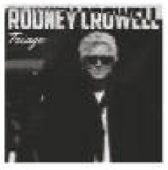
Rodney Crowell

★★★★

Triage

RC1/THIRTY TIGERS. CD/DL/LP

His 18th, and most personal, studio album.



Two years after *Texas*, the love letter to his home state, 71-year-old Rodney Crowell looks at the world inside himself after being battered by political, social and economic upheavals. As a songwriter, Crowell is often a glass-half-full kind of guy, believing in the universe's power to heal all pain through love, kindness and karma. Among the more serious issues of Don't Leave Me Now, which could easily pass as a Roy Orbison song, or directly political Something Has To Change, his positivity also comes tongue-in-cheek as he sings, "I'm all about love… I love Vladimir Putin, I love Benedict Arnold, I'm happy to say, I even love Donald," over the early rock'n'roll groove of I'm All About Love. Amid the chaos, some rare calm and solace from Emmylou Harris's favourite rhythm guitarist.

Andy Fyfe

LIBERATION
TIME

John McLaughlin

★★★★

Liberation Time

ABSTRACT LOGIX. CD/DL/LP

Jazz-rock avatar's 19th studio album.

Though he retired from touring in 2017 and will be 80 next January, McLaughlin's inner creative fire is still burning brightly on *Liberation Time*, which ponders the human cost of the global pandemic and the consequences of lockdown; and unlike Van Morrison's latest opus, is not a conspiracy theory rant but a considered assessment of the emotional, social, and spiritual toll on us all. McLaughlin's sense of social isolation during the past year is represented by two tracks where he plays solo piano, but overall the vibe is positive. Despite its title, Lockdown Blues is hopeful rather than desolate, while the incendiary As The Spirit Sings, with its nimble-fingered fret work, is defiantly optimistic. The album is also notable for some of the guitarist's most jazz-inflected work in recent times, like the barnstorming, bebop-tinged Right Here, Right Now, Right On.

Charles Waring

Lucinda Chua

★★★★

Antidotes

4AD. DL/LP

London-based singer-songwriter-cellist explores ambient R&B.

CHUA HAS always believed that less is more. Her first band, Felix, approached chamber rock with understated calm, a trait she refined and expanded via touring stints with Slint and Stars Of The Lid. Finally, on her own, Chua's twin EPs, Antidotes 1 and Antidotes 2 (combined here) carve out a remarkable sense of intimacy and stillness, balanced by shades of unease in haiku-style vignettes. "What is more beautiful than night/Or bluer than the sky?/Higher and higher/Until I fall," ponders Until I Fall; Torch Song explores a fear of relationships – "Love, love I'm on fire/Well, burn me 'til I'm gone" – as strings cushion her fall. Post-classical and ambient drone aren't the only story here: Chua's stately and luscious vocals have palpable soul; likewise her serene melodies, resembling R&B ballads loosened from their moorings, drifting into the great unknown.

Martin Aston

Lucinda Chua: floating on wings of sound.

Nhu Xuan Hua

Collective fellowship: Nathan Salsburg's shortcuts to transcendence.

Mickie Winters

Songs of praise

Folk roots, new routes. A master guitarist finds his spiritual voice. By **John Mulvey**.

תהלים
PSALMS • NATHAN SALSBURG

Nathan Salsburg

★★★★

Psalms

NO QUARTER. CD/DL/LP

THERE CAN be few people in the United States with a better working knowledge of folk music than Nathan Salsburg. For the past 20 years, his day job has been Curator of the Alan Lomax Digital Archive, dealing with the 24,000-odd tracks recorded by Lomax, the great American ethnomusicologist, over seven decades in the field. A professional life marinated in – blues and worksongs, proclamations and laments, the old-time tales and spiritual epiphanies of the American southeast; it's not a bad way to make a living.

That weight of vernacular musical tradition couldn't fail to have an impact on a musician, especially a virtuoso guitarist like Salsburg. But while his 2011 debut, *Affirmed*, proved he could trade fingerpicking smarts with the most fastidious John Fahey acolyte, Salsburg's quiet and lovely sequence of albums has shown him skilled at evading such an obvious path. If there's a more explicit debt to Lomax's treasure trove in the music Salsburg has made alone and alongside Joan Shelley and James Elkington, it might be his efforts reframing folk music from Britain and Ireland; 2017's *Third*, for instance, featured a take on an ancient Irish hornpipe tune, Planxty Davis.

Salsburg learned Planxty Davis from Nic Jones's 1980 version, though, and he is all too aware of the pitfalls of being a mere revivalist and appropriator. Instead, the Louisville resident's curatorial work has given him an understanding of cultural history that is careful and scholarly, but also alive to the possibilities of renewal. Hence *Psalms*, Salsburg's fourth solo album proper, and a distinct career high. This time, the historical debt is textual: literally, Hebrew psalms, set to new melodies composed by Salsburg. He sings them, too, in a voice rarely heard on his previous records, while friends including Shelley and Elkington, Will Oldham, and the fine Israeli singer Noa Babayof provide nuanced support. The results conjure up an idea of Bert Jansch at his most warm and companionable, making new art from a liturgical tradition that may be unfamiliar to many of us.

The way Salsburg tells it, the genesis of *Psalms* comes from a CD-R passed on by Oldham and labelled "Jewish Jams", which contained a 2004 album called *Dark'cho* by Jonathan Harkham & David Asher Brook. The duo rearranged *niggunim* – Jewish religious songs – as a kind of mournful indie-folk, a little reminiscent of Sufjan Stevens. Over time, their example allowed Salsburg to tentatively re-engage with the music he remembered from childhood summer camps, until this project to rescore the Hebrew Book Of Psalms began around five years ago. Certain edits were made: Salsburg's take on Psalm 47, as Jewish Currents writer Nathan Goldman has noted, excludes the line "[God] crushes peoples beneath us and nations beneath our feet."

The nine tracks, then, feel like adaptations of tradition rather than replays. The music is airy chamber folk rock, for the most part, horns and strings dappling Salsburg's crisp lead lines; Steve Gunn is probably the best contemporary analogue. Sometimes, as on Psalm 147 and the gorgeous end section of Psalm 90, Salsburg falls into gently evolving melodic loops, kin to the *Landwerk* records he released last year, where he improvised over samples from old 78s of 1920s klezmer bands and such. The standout, though, co-opts O You Who Sleep, by the medieval poet Judah Halevi, and grafts it onto Psalm 96 for something akin to an anthem, as Salsburg's understated voice stretches towards a rousing tone, and Spencer Tweedy's drums kick up the martial pace.

For those of us with little concrete faith, sacred music often appeals as a short-cut to transcendence, a vicarious way of tapping into the meditative and ecstatic states of true believers. Here, in contrast, the vibe is more rooted, unmystical, a celebration of collective purpose. Contextualising all recent music as the product of lockdown is already a cliché, but on *Psalms* the remote working, and the digitally amassed voices, are a way of sustaining community through enforced isolation. It may not be folk music by the strictest academic definition, but Salsburg takes a solitary practice, rich with historical and cultural significance, and brings people together into what he refers to as a "*chavurah* – a collaborative fellowship". Outside libraries, can folk music aspire to anything higher?

Dot Allison: fractured cosmic wondering and a sense of time passing.

Love hurts

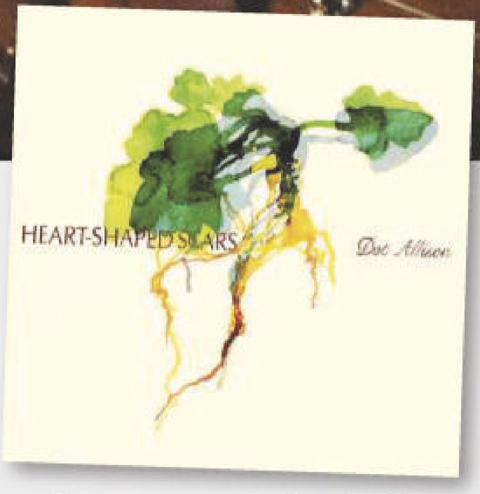
First album in 12 years from the One Dove frontwoman. By **Victoria Segal**.

Dot Allison

★★★★

Heart-Shaped Scars

SA RECORDINGS. CD/DL/LP



A CROWN OF Midsommar-style flowers, white robes, a tor at dawn: the images that start to rise up from *Heart-Shaped Scars*, Dot Allison's fourth solo album, manage to be both impeccably eerie and oddly familiar. The Edinburgh-based singer-songwriter emerged in the early '90s as the frontwoman of the Andrew Weatherall-produced One Dove, a band whose dance-rock pioneering never quite bore the crossover fruit their 1993 album *Morning Dove White* promised. Allison isn't the first former raver to find comedown comfort in pagan folk and mystery cults as the heat and light of technology cools; it is not impossible to trace a line from the Higher Than The Sun mantra of One Dove's Breakdown to *Heart-Shaped Scars*' fractured cosmic wondering.

The full glare of Linda Perhacs's *Parallelograms* bounces off opening track Long Exposure, a gentle wronged-maiden lament complete with Snow White-style glass coffin, and Allison quickly heads into a world of ancient woodlands, ambivalent nature and lingering ghosts. Field recordings of Hebridean birdsong and sea add authentic ambience. Occasionally there's a hint of outside worldliness – the faded photograph on Long Exposure, the "slip inside my haunted house" on The Haunted – but otherwise, Allison seems out on her own with her fragile voice.

There's fruit and seeds, sun and water, a sense of passing time; everything just slightly on the turn or poignantly past its best. Cue The Tears and the quiet delirium of One Love mix up the processes required for love with those needed for photosynthesis, while Love Died In Our Arms hits Birnam Wood for the full Macbeth ("A little water/Is sure to clear us of this"). "Autumn's touch/Harvest worn/Winter's grasp beckons us on," she sighs on Can You Hear Nature Sing?, part almanac, part Summerisle tour guide.

It's too pretty to catch the striking daguerreotype expressions of P.J. Harvey's *White Chalk*, a record committed to a similarly vintage sense of unease, but mellotrons, harmoniums, and the elegant Robert Kirby-style string arrangements (courtesy of Hannah Peel and Lucy Wilkins) change the weather around her. Occasionally, the album strays into mindfulness territory, as much background as the birds. Yet while *Heart-Shaped Scars* might not be the first flowering of such wistful folk mysteries, it still brings in a good harvest.

Brain Damage Meets Big Youth

★★★★

Beyond The Blue

JARRING EFFECTS. CD/DL/LP

The foundation singjay's return to form, with unusual French jazz backing.

Since the late '90s, the French multi-instrumentalist Martin Nathan has produced leftfield music as Brain Damage, often with Samuel Clayton Junior, Toots's regular touring engineer. This extraordinary collaboration with renowned toaster Big Youth benefits from a striking jazz framework, crafted by live musicians in Saint Etienne, with subtle post-production dub touches from esteemed remixer Manu Anti-Bypass and snatches of in-studio dialogue enhancing the experience. A reworking of I Pray Thee has strolling bass and melodious trumpet, and Wareika Hill namechecks Kingston venues of old on a Jamming variant. Big Youth salutes Fats Waller and the Doobie Brothers on harmonica blues Grandma's Joint, and on Biological Warfare ponders the possible lab origins of Covid-19, which tragically caused Clayton's death before the LP's completion, rendering *Beyond The Blue* a testament to his commitment to growing reggae's potential audience overseas.

David Katz

Charlie Parr

★★★★

Last Of The Better Days Ahead

SMITHSONIAN FOLKWAYS. CD/DL/LP

Modern Dust Bowl-style blues on the Duluth maverick's 14th LP.

Cynical, hopeful characters from the Minnesota paper mills and fisheries and Parr's own memories make up these tales, and in the title track – propelled by a steel Mule resonator and harsh, urgent vocal – our narrator recalls selling the only car he ever loved, back in his twenties: "You thought it contained some meaning or some answers to a life/That you never bothered to question." Brooding and angry as John Lee Hooker, Walking Back From Willmar introduces us to Tony, trailer park security guy and friend of stray dogs. Elsewhere, on 817 Oakland Avenue, there's simple, lyrical joy: "Can you remember what it's like/When all the world is filled with light?" Hypnotic stories of low-key endurance and universal questions, like Raymond Carver's fiction set to a louche, crystal-clear soundtrack.

Glyn Brown

Isaiah Collier & The Chosen Few

★★★★

Cosmic Transitions

DIVISION 81. CD/DL/LP

Stellar third from astral-minded 23-year-old Chicago multi-instrumentalist

When the gifted Isaiah Collier used to practise his saxophone at 2am, his father and two brothers would sometimes get up to join him on piano, drums and bass. His mother's forbearance in not shutting down those out-of-hours family jam sessions has borne sumptuous fruit in this expansive five-part suite. Recorded at Rudy Van Gelder's studio with the same set-up John Coltrane used for *A Love Supreme*, *Cosmic Transitions*' greatest challenge was to feel and sound like a vital piece of collective self-expression rather than a carefully staged exercise in historical reconstruction. The jury remains out on that question for the first seven minutes or so – as the words "cosmic transitions" are intoned repeatedly over a vague rustling of temple bells, the mantra finally adjusted to "cosmic black music" before Michael Shekwoaga Ode's powerhouse drum rolls usher in the actual musical content – but from then on the verdict is unanimously, joyously, in the affirmative, with a special mention for pianist Mike King's inspired performance in the role of McCoy Tyner.

Ben Thompson

Jungle

★★★★

Loving In Stereo

XL. CD/DL/LP

London collective's third album of distinctive grooves and textures.

Increased exposure to Jungle's hard-won second album *For Ever* revealed it to be a genuine masterpiece, a rare record that deposits you in its own world and deepens with every listen. *Loving In Stereo* feels altogether more insouciant. They've gone looking elsewhere for vibes and are having fun. Getting stronger as it goes on, the album plays like a compilation of unknown hits, sometimes with an upbeat, '90s feel, with echoes of Brit-breakbeat like Stereo MCs in Talk About It or forgotten indie pop in the bouncy Truth. Bonnie Hill sounds like The Brothers Johnson's Stomp! slowed down. No Rules – possibly the motto for the writing here – is an atomised cop show anthem. Can't Stop The Stars boasts an expansive, Northern soul kind of poignant positivity. Bristling with hooks, this thoroughly enjoyable set deserves to be spilling out of open windows wherever it's summer.

Jim Irvin

Mega Bog

★★★★

Life, And Another

PARADISE OF BACHELORS. CD/DL/LP

Erin Birgy's weird and wonderful follow-up to 2019's *Dolphine*.

As *Life, And Another* finishes, the lingering feeling is that it exists beyond definable time and space. There are flashes of late-'60s Elektra Records' boundary pushers, jazzy time shifts, Mort Garson-esque piano, echoes of Kevin Ayers and Yoko Ono, Boys Of Summer '80s opacity and hypnagogic fogginess. This album is not pinned to any period of music. In the course of one phrase, Erin Birgy's voice shifts from whisperingly conversational to scat-ish acrobatics. As to its geographical setting, though Birgy is American, Yumi Matsutoya's suggests Japan, perhaps early '70s Island Records or where Joni Mitchell landed around the time of *Mingus*. Audaciously, it all coheres. The vision is precise and the execution meticulous. The album's 14 songs are tightly arranged and energetically delivered. Big Thief's James Krivchenia contributes and co-produces, but that's no signifier. It's Birgy's show.

Kieron Tyler

Roger Chapman

★★★★

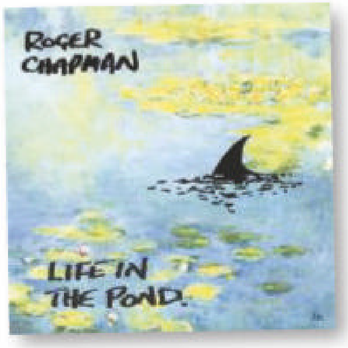
Life In The Pond

RUF. CD/DL

The veteran frontman of Family and Streetwalkers unretires himself.

It's been a busy year in the studio for the old guard: Sir Tom Jones staying hip with the kids; Van Morrison staying hip with the grumpy old men. And now here is Roger Chapman, belting out boisterous, red-blooded R&B in his unique grizzled yowl – undimmed after 79 years. Also undimmed, apparently, are his lusts as he dreams of wild women and "a rodeo ride with the widow next door". Yes, it's an old dog offering old tricks – Collar Turned Up could be from the final Family album. But there is smart production from Poli Palmer, who sprinkles brass, fiddle and vibes amid the driving guitars. That and the singer's enduring knack for writing a good hook elevate the 11 songs here above the humdrum. In fact, all are self-composed, with the final Naughty Child a bit of a Chappo classic. Welcome back, Roger.

John Bungey



Anika

★★★★

Change

INVADA/SACRED BONES. CD/DL/LP

Berlin post-punk blossoms amid "a vomit of emotions, anxieties and empowerment".

ANNIKA HENDERSON (double "n" in real life) has moved mysteriously since 2010's PiL-inspired self-titled debut, and her concurrent gig voicing for Geoff Barrow's Beak. Circa 2016-18, her perma-frosty, Nico-comparable tones fronted Mexico City avant-rockers Exploded View, but this second solo outing is her Eureka! moment, channelling that Anglo-Teutonic *froideur* into music of melodic allure, rippling synth-rock groove, and substantial lyrical muscle. Third up, the title track is simply wonderful, a slo-mo motivational anthem centred on the thirtysomething chanteuse's repeated conviction that "I think we can change." Sand Witches, by contrast, finds her adopting an almost Kate Tempest-esque flow of polemical disgust to undulating electronica. The album's darker content was apparently inspired by the eerie relevance of Hannah's Arendt's 'Banality Of Evil' to the Trump/Johnson era. Much like Cate Le Bon's fifth album *Reward*, having clear ideas to express has enabled Anika to spread her wings artistically, and *Change*, too, is a joy to behold.

Andrew Perry

Anika: it's her Eureka! moment.

Sven Gutjahr

On Hound Dog's trail: GA-20's Matt Stubbs (left) and Pat Faherty.

GA-20

★★★★

Does Hound Dog Taylor: Try It… You Might Like It!

COLEMINE/ALLIGATOR. CD/DL/LP

Tribute to the unsung blues great by the band led by Charlie Musselwhite's guitarist.

GA-20
DOES HOUND DOG TAYLOR
TRY IT... YOU MIGHT LIKE IT!

HOUND DOG Taylor was a Chicago bluesman who played raw boogie like no other. Here GA-20 – guitarist Matt Stubbs, guitarist/vocalist Pat Faherty, drummer Tim Carman – mark 50 years since the release of Taylor's debut *Hound Dog Taylor And The Houserockers* with 10 covers (four from that remarkable first record, four from 1974 follow-up *Natural Boogie*, one each from his two posthumous albums). The group painstakingly recreated Taylor's elemental sound by tracking down the vintage amps and guitars he used and following his recording schedule: two days playing live in one room, tracks of no more than three takes each. Their enthusiasm for the project is palpable and if their joyful noise turns just one listener onto the original, it's job done.

Lois Wilson

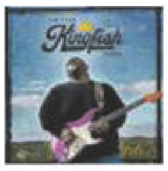
Christone 'Kingfish' Ingram

★★★★

662

ALLIGATOR. CD/DL

His second album raises the 22-year-old bluesman to the first rank.



662 is the area code for Clarksdale, Mississippi, where Christone Ingram played his first gig at the age of 11, recalled in Something In The Dirt. His music is swathed in memories, even imaginary ones: "I'm too young to remember, but I'm old enough to know." He alludes to Robert Johnson, Lightnin' Hopkins and Buddy Guy, whom he has promised to "keep it going". But interspersed with these testimonies to the blues' past are songs from a proud present, like the aching soul of That's All It Takes, with its lyrical guitar line, or Another Life Goes By, a temperate contribution to BLM. Every track on this exceptional album (mostly written with producer Tom Hambridge) is arranged with great conciseness, and Ingram's astonishing creativity on guitar is condensed into solos that are flamboyant but never overstated.

Tony Russell

Pachyman

★★★

The Return Of…

ATO. CD/DL/LP

Puerto Rico's (belated) answer to King Tubby.

Pachy García, AKA Pachyman, here digresses from his main task as singing drummer with LA synth-punkers Prettiest Eyes to delve elbows-deep into the sonic iconography of '70s dub. While at university in Ponce, he binged on hardcore punk, jazz and vintage reggae, as well as New York's Easy Star All-Stars, responsible for post-millennial Floyd makeover, *Dub Side Of The Moon*. While there's a faint whiff of that album's stoner kitsch about his follow-up to 2019's debut, *In Dub*, its core rhythms, almost entirely self-played and studio-assembled, are original and strong, the amusingly self-proclamatory opener Big Energy packing an irresistible bass-and-drum lope, amid expertly finessed echo and FX. Further in, Sunset Sound branches off into tootling keyboard exotica reminiscent of Mo' Wax's Money Mark, while on Ruben Durazo, the titular Puerto Rican trombone luminary blasts away amid spaghetti-western rattlesnake percussion. García presents a familiar universe, but one hugely enjoyable to revisit in the here and now.

Andrew Perry

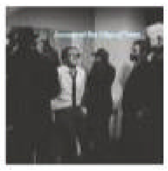
Lounge At The Edge Of Town

★★★★

Lounge At The Edge Of Town

THE COMPLETE ATOMIC. CD/DL/LP

Turin Brakes duo team up with musical Zelig.



Olly Knights and Gale Paridjanian rarely get credit for their part in kickstarting the Brit singer-songwriter revival 20 years ago with Turin Brakes' *The Optimist* album. Likewise, few are aware of Phil Ramacon's influence on their record collection, from working with Talk Talk to co-writing Neneh Cherry's Buffalo Stance. Lounge At The Edge Of Town is the result of the trio bonding during a 2019 Mark Hollis tribute show. On the surface the album is *The Optimist* with Ramacon piano, but its DNA lies much deeper, with traces of Steely Dan (Can't Look Down), Joe Jackson (Another Light), John Barry (Eclipse) and even *Goodbye Yellow Brick Road*-era Elton John (Bad Dreams). Knights and Paridjanian, and Ramacon, have barely made a misstep in their careers, and *Lounge At The Edge Of Town* is as sure-footed as they've ever been.

Andy Fyfe

Susanna & David Wallumrød

★★★

Live

SUSANNASONATA. CD/DL/LP

The Norwegian brother and sister rekindle early union.

A crystalline refraction of Tom Waits' Johnsburg, Illinois closes *Live*. As it fades, applause is heard – the only moment that reveals an audience. Otherwise, this could be a studio album. Recorded in 2019 and 2020, these eight cover versions reunite Norwegian siblings Susanna and David Wallumrød. She's made a mark with Susanna And The Magical Orchestra and most recently issued *Baudelaire & Piano*, setting the poet's words to her music. He plays with the band Spirit In The Dark and is a busy studio pianist. Before their paths diverged, they performed as a duo. *Live* revisits their repertoire from then: The Beatles (For No One), Leonard Cohen, Emmylou Harris (whose All My Tears is more of a lament than ever), Joni Mitchell and Tom Waits. Susanna's ecstatic voice weaves through David's Fender Rhodes piano. Spooky, when taken as whole.

Kieron Tyler

Dana Gillespie

★★★★

Deep Pockets

ACE. CD/DL

Celebrating her sixth decade of music making with her 72nd (!!) album.

The 72-year-old queen of the British blues recorded *Deep Pockets* in a home studio in La Lucertola, Lago Maggiore in the early part of this year. The 12 songs, all originals co-written with lead guitarist Jake Zaitz, and recorded live over four days in just one or two takes, are musically rich and lyrically sage, exploring subject matter ranging from loss (the moving eulogy Now You're Stardust) to a need for universal harmony (We Share The Same Sky). Gillespie calls what she does "Blues for thinkers", but the thrills are also visceral in nature. In particular on thumping life-manifesto Beat Of My Own Drum and sparky title track which has her "…on fire, all guns blazing… raising hell tonight."

Lois Wilson

Peter Bruntnell

★★★★

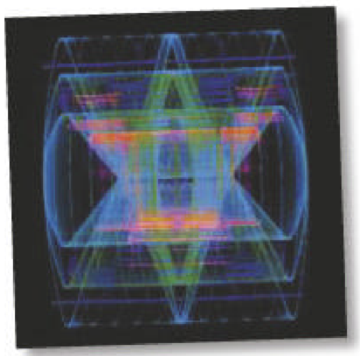
Journey To The Sun

DOMESTICO. CD/DL/LP

Devon singer-songwriter reaches peak melancholy on 12th album.

"What this album needs is more bouzouki," said almost no one ever, and yet here it features on Peter Bruntnell's most melancholy solo album. For Bruntnell, however, melancholy is a setting that gives his search for human kindness a massive emotional updraft. *Journey To The Sun* is a very solo album, with the singer playing everything apart from some guest keyboards by Peter Linnane (Willard Grant Conspiracy). Alongside the bouzouki – which in Bruntnell's hands sounds more like a brash guitar – he also introduces an occasional synth and concertina. Yet mostly this is him and his guitar used to maximum poetic effect on the haunting Dharma Liar and Dandelion, the unusually (for Bruntnell) excoriating You'd Make A Great Widow, Merrion's wondrous tale of lost love, and the perky folk pop of Runaway Car. Somehow, some way, this cult and infinitely classy songwriter must surely get his due wider recognition.

Andy Fyfe



Raven Bush

★★★

Fall Into Noise

PRAH. CD/DL/LP

Margate-based producer and violinist takes solo plunge.

In the course of his work as a violinist with Christine And The Queens, Kae Tempest and Mica Levi, Raven Bush might be used to operating slightly under the radar, but the Syd Arthur member is in complete – if somewhat tense – control on his urgent debut album. Plugged into an expansive techno landscape, Bush charges at this music like a bull in a VR helmet. Made Of Stars or Unfurling's glitchy suspense come lit with the green glow of John Carpenter's ominous soundtracking; retro sci-fi unease bubbles under Start Of Something New. There are more mellow moments – Never sounds like an agitated Boards Of Canada – but driven as it is, *Fall Into Noise* isn't the sound of somebody interested in a soft landing.

Victoria Segal

The Helicopter Of The Holy Ghost

★★★

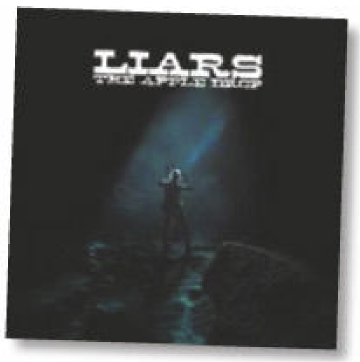
Afters

KSCOPE. CD/DL/LP

Ballad-centric collective with Bluetone Mark Morriss and Theaudience's Billy Reeves.

It was in 2017, seven years after a coma-inducing car crash, that Billy Reeves was re-introduced to two minidiscs of demos he'd forgotten about due to post-accident amnesia. It's these ideas, now largely re-shaped around the reposeful piano of guest Crayola Lectern, that he and Morriss sculpt into a fittingly dream-like album whose other guests include Cocteau Twins' Simon Raymonde and musical associates of Paul Weller, Joe Strummer and Amy Winehouse. Not everything delivers on the promise of the Korgis-like first single Slow Down, but *Afters* benefits from repeat listens, songs that at first seem merely saccharine (Difficult Song; You Too) coming to stand for lost chapters of a life. Evocative wee-small-hours instrumental Hangar Lane Gyratory System cements the sense of a deeply cryptic underbelly.

James McNair



Liars

★★★★

The Apple Drop

MUTE. CD/DL/LP

A new line-up brings the noise for Angus Andrew's ever-evolving project.

Following founder-member Aaron Hemphill's 2017 exit, Liars' Angus Andrew recorded two albums of low-key introspection alone in the Australian bush. But now Liars have become a group again, with the addition of avant-jazz drummer Laurence Pike and multi-instrumentalist Cameron Deyell. The result is a masterful, thrillingly descent into, minor-key melancholy, with a dynamic that seesaws between static gloom and cathartic, industrial clatter. The latter catches the ear first – The Start's askew electronica and sampled choirs, the near-symphonic intensity of Big Appetite and the rasping Keith Levene-esque guitars of My Pulse To Ponder all proving Andrew as caustically, chaotically inventive a noise-smith as ever. But it's in the more subtle, understated pieces – like Acid Crop, with its spidery guitar lines, doomy riffs and sinister intonations – that Liars' sulphurous power truly resides, delivering a deliciously unsettling and artful listening experience.

Stevie Chick

Lightning Bug: looking forward by looking back.

Ingmar Chen, Daniel Swan

Nicholas Krgovich

★★★★

This Spring

TIN ANGEL. DL/LP

The Vancouver singer-songwriter pays tribute to one of his hometown heroes.

Nicholas Krgovich has been a Veda Hille fan since he was a teenager. In 1997 he even formed a Veda Hille covers band, with a 12-year-old drummer and his piano teacher's daughter on violin. When he started playing solo shows himself circa 2013, he noticed that his cover of Hille's song Plants would attract questions and admiration. Listening to Plants in its recorded form here it's obvious that Krgovich and Hille are a perfect match. Krgovich softens Hille's cabaret style delivery, yet emphasises her delicate impressionist imagery, locating a wistful sadness and complex defiance at the heart of her art-pop vignettes. It's clear Krgovich recognises something of himself in Hille's work, a lonesome content, perhaps, but he also homes in on Hille's ability to capture the poetic beauty of the suburban every day in a way that is quite magical.

Andrew Male

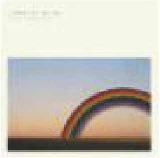
Lightning Bug

★★★★

A Color Of The Sky

FAT POSSUM. CD/DL/LP/MC

New York indie rockers' third LP locates their inner glow.



Lightning Bug's first two LPs, *Floaters* and *October Song*, oscillated between My Bloody Valentine blurriness and Low-like somnambulance. *A Color Of The Sky* is more cohesive, languid and country-fied. Indeed, the record sprang from singer Audrey Kang's coastal camping trip, and the becalmed sound – including her buttery voice – is Kang settling into her skin, looking forward by looking back. The opening The Return sets the tone – "For all my foolish errors and the beauty I have drunk/I think I'll learn to live my life as wisely as a monk" – and winds philosophically through peaks such as The Right Thing Is Hard to Do and September Song, Part II: "The sunset brings me to fruition/I am raw, I am new in the transition," for which Bobbie Gentry should come out of retirement to cover.

Martin Aston

ELECTRONICA

BY STEPHEN WORTHY

Koreless

★★★★

Agor

YOUNG. CD/DL/LP

A sumptuous mélange of ambient, club tools and modern classical.

OBSESSIVE ATTENTION to detail is usually a good thing, but for Lewis Roberts, it almost sank a debut album years in the making. Not that the Welshman has been unproductive this past decade, having worked with Mercury Prize winner Sampha and FKA Twigs. He's part of a cadre of contemporary electronic musicians who oscillate between sensuous sound design and alternative club tracks, modern classical and dense, soundtrack-ready narratives. Mostly beatless, *Agor* instead relies on harmonic and melodic explorations that saw Roberts spending 15 hours a day, every day, on individual sound shards. Yet it's not a record that outstays its welcome, shuttling between Black Rainbow's baroque mind-bending, alternative club banger Joy Squad, and Act(s), which channels Benjamin Britten's choral work and Oneohtrix Point Never's melancholic digi-pop. They're so concentrated and packed with flavour, that Koreless's fanatical approach is fully vindicated.

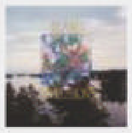
ALSO RELEASED

Sonny Ism

★★★★

Island Impressions

NORTHERN UNDERGROUND. DL/LP



The bucolic, carefree existence that Australian Sonny Ism lives with his fiancée – foraging, hiking and swimming on an island in the Stockholm archipelago – percolates through his music. Blissful Balearic beats, soft and squiggly acid and smoked-out chillwave combine on this warm-hearted album. One that acts as a compelling argument for hitting 'reset' and syncing with nature's rhythms.

Mano Le Tough

★★★

At The Moment

PAMPA. CD/DL/LP

Over the years, Mano Le Tough's club-ready tunes have best prospered in the darkest recesses of the dancefloor. However, by lining *At The Moment* with campfire-style Americana (Moment To Change), dub (No Road Without A Turn) and droney hip-hop (New/cycles), the Irish producer showcases an aptitude for twisting electronics and mellifluous guitars into outsider alt-pop.

Llyr

★★★★

Biome

MESH. DL/LP

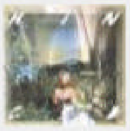
Real frog choruses, mating insects and clattering cave bats provide some of the natural sonic palette used by Berlin-based producer Gareth Williams' debut album as Llyr. Gleaned from field recordings taken in the Borneo jungle, the Welshman twists and manipulates these found sounds to create textured aural landscapes, experimental ambient and trancey bombs. *Biome* is fascinating, immersive, and rewarding.

Maarja Nuut

★★★

Hinged

BANDCAMP. DL/LP/MC



Estonian violinist and electronic experimentalist, Maarja Nuut, makes folkish, out-there beats with a playful quality. In its skittish rhythms and idiosyncratic vocal style, as on the chattering A Feast, it recalls the fantastical world created by Argentina's high priestess of the avant-garde, Juana Molina. Dreamlike and edgy, *Hinged* is the right kind of weird. *SW*

FILTER ALBUM

Jackson Browne: looking beyond the sickness.

JACKSON BROWNE

Ocean reign

First album in seven years from the quintessential California singer-songwriter and environmentalist. By **Sylvie Simmons**.

Jackson Browne

★★★★

Downhill From Everywhere

INSIDE RECORDINGS. CD/DL/LP

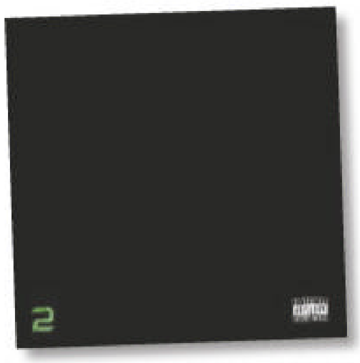
THERE'S ALWAYS been a seriousness to Jackson Browne – right back to the mid '60s when a 16-year-old surfer boy wrote These Days, a song whose preternatural literacy, depth and reflection would go on to define the West Coast singer-songwriter movement. Ironically it would take a while before Brown – signed as a songwriter, not a singer – got to join that club. But he ended the 1970s with a run of hit albums – and also a free concert to protest a nuclear power plant. Ever since, environmental activism and human rights causes have played a serious part in his life and music – his previous album, 2014's *Standing In The Breach*, being one of the finest examples of that personal/political fusion.

The follow-up, Browne's 15th LP, has 10 new songs and many fewer collaborators. The original plan was to release it a couple of years ago to mark his 70th birthday, but you know. (Browne actually caught Covid when playing a benefit concert). The title might suggest an old guy grumbling that the world's gone to hell in a handbasket, but it's less passive and more specific than that. The title track is about plastic trash polluting the oceans, while the transgressive reign of Trump provided plenty of ammunition for other songs.

However, listen to opener Still Looking For Something and you might think it a forgotten Browne song from the '70s: soulful midtempo West Coast rock with the kind of romantic rock lyrics that Bruce Springsteen – inducting Browne into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame – said he wished he had written. "I'm out here under the neon, baby/Still looking for something in the night/I don't mind giving up something/You don't get something for nothing."

There are some anthemic rockers – the '70s Stones-esque Until Justice Is Real is good, the strident backing vocals not so much – but most of the album's highlights are the midtempo or slower songs. Minutes To Downtown: reflective and beautifully crafted, about love, life and time. A Little Too Soon To Say: a classic Browne ballad. "I want to see you find your way/Beyond the sirens and the broken night/Beyond the sickness of our day". A Human Touch – co-written with Leslie Mendelson for an upcoming documentary about an early AIDS clinic and sung with her as a duet – is another beauty. The Dreamer – co-written with David Hidalgo (Los Lobos) and Eugene Rodriguez (Los Cenzontles) and sung in English and Spanish – is a tender South Of The Border-esque ballad about the US deporting a Mexican girl.

"The walls that we've built between us," Browne sings in that warm, familiar voice, "Keep us prisoners of our fear." This is an album about inclusion, he says. And humanity. Here's to humanity. Seriously.



Dean Blunt

★★★★

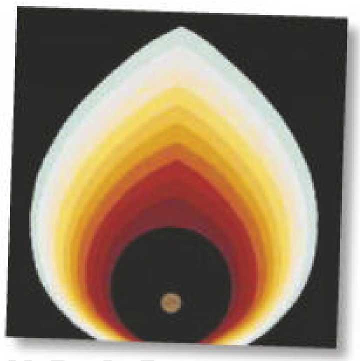
Black Metal 2

ROUGH TRADE. CD/DL/LP

Enigmatic Londoner returns to abstract indie seam mined on 2014's *Black Metal*.

The middle ground between Cocteau Twins and The Last Poets is plentiful terrain, and Dean Blunt has made a lovely home there. With its 10 tracks and 24-minute running time, this unexpected sequel – its sleeve nodding playfully to Dr Dre's *2001* – might look like a small-scale musical property, but once you're inside, it's a mansion. "Here we are, back on the guitar and it's getting me," Blunt intones gleefully on wobbly yet explosive Semtex, and just as you're wondering if you might have missed any of the blatant canonical samples (notably The Pastels and Big Star) that were the original *Black Metal*'s signposts, you realise The Jesus And Mary Chain's favourite Be My Baby breakbeat is lurking in the mix. What's more front and centre throughout is Blunt's voice – gruff but tender, demotic and dynamic, a thought-provoking counterpoint to the stateliest strings and most ethereal harmonies that collaborators Mica Levi and Joanne Robertson have to offer.

Ben Thompson



K.D.A.P.

★★★★

Influences

ARTS & CRAFTS PRODUCTIONS. CD/DL/LP

Broken Social Scene's Kevin Drew sounding nothing like Broken Social Scene.

Toronto's Broken Social Scene may have been perfecting their skew-whiff indie-pop since 1999, but leader Kevin Drew has been covertly in thrall to Brian Eno's ambient canon and the Warp catalogue. Transforming himself into Kevin Drew A Picture on his third solo album, it's a love that has finally spoken its name. Recorded during an extended stay in England and apparently intended as outdoor listening, it's a cavalcade of electronic invention. Twists and turns abound, be it Exploding Lip Balm, the pulsating, Warp-esque earworm which flowers into a gorgeous, stentorian piano coda owing as much to Yanni as Eno, or The Slinfold Loop (named after the Sussex village where Drew stayed) borrowing both the opening to Simple Minds' Waterfront and instrumental sections from Kraftwerk's full-length Autobahn before somersaulting into a mini symphony. In all, an indulgence that doesn't sound indulgent.

John Aizlewood

Triptides

★★★

Alter Echoes

ALIVE NATURALSOUND. DL/LP

Indiana trio move to Los Angeles, ignite Paisley Underground revival.

Intentional or otherwise, *Alter Echoes*' title is a perfect reflection of Triptides' stated roots: "The Byrds at their most hallucinogenic and Floyd at their most cosmically composed" (according to this album's accompanying notes). Logically, then, they most closely resemble early '80s Byrds/Floyd alchemists The Rain Parade. Lacking the giddy, limpid touch of RP founder David Roback, Triptides are too grounded and studied to truly qualify as 'hallucinogenic' or 'cosmic', but they wear it well, and after 11 years and seven albums, multi-instrumentalist Glenn Brigman, bassist/guitarist Stephen Burns and drummer Brendan Peleo-Lazar dovetail beautifully. They're skilful enough to sidestep homage too: Elemental Chemistry is bluesy and serpentine; She Doesn't Want To Know is a tender bossa nova treat with Bacharach chord changes; and Moonlight Reflection has a persuasively Rundgren-esque sound. So, let's do the time-warp again.

Martin Aston

TRIPTIDES
ALTER ECHOES

Maria Muldaur With Tuba Skinny

★★★★

Let's Get Happy Together

STONY PLAIN. CD/DL/LP

An Americana matriarch teams up with a crew of young jazzers.

MARIA MULDAUR

As the singer in the Jim Kweskin Jug Band in the 1960s, Maria Muldaur revealed her deep steep in early jazz and blues. Even after pop stardom with 1974's Midnight At The Oasis, she went on to record covers of Bessie Smith and Memphis Minnie. Her voice has a naturally lazy, hot summer day sensuality that echoes those city blues queens of the 1920s and '30s. She's in cahoots here with Tuba Skinny, young New Orleans street musicians who make 100-year-old jazz come alive. The collaboration has so much heat, one could say it was a match made in a bordello: Muldaur exuding sultriness on The Boswell Sisters' Got The South In My Soul and paying tribute to gender-bending on Half-Pint Jaxon's Be Your Natural Self.

Michael Simmons

JOSIENNE CLARKE
A Small Unknowable Thing

Josienne Clarke

★★★★

A Small Unknowable Thing

CORDUROY PUNK. CD/DL/LP

Second album from folk singer's intriguing solo evolution.

"I cannot be confined or contained," sings Josienne Clarke, "I will not be refined or restrained." The lyrics of Repaid initially feel like overstatement, because Clarke's second LP since splitting with musical partner Ben Walker in 2018 seems careful, measured, even mindful, hardly a record of unruly outbursts. Yet behind the precision of Clarke's vocals and guitar, the moments of expansive we-are-stardust meditation reminiscent of Adrianne Lenker, This Is The Kit or even modern Bill Callahan, lurks an angrier energy. It's there in Deep Cut's bitter putdowns, the quickfire brevity of Like This, the sudden jaw-clenching tempo-shift of Never Lie. There's more explicit protest on Sit Out ("All you stand for makes me want to sit out") where Clarke's bright, bracing voice resists the heavy distortion around her. *A Small Unknowable Thing* doesn't hold back, but it never loses its perfect control.

Victoria Segal

Alex Rex

★★★

Paradise

NEOLITHIC. CD/DL/LP

Glaswegian's roots revelry in "the Lake Districts of shame" and "Peak Districts of desire".

Alex Neilson is many things: the engine room of folk rock mavericks Trembling Bells, serial collaborator (Will Oldham, Six Organs Of Admittance, Shirley Collins), occasional improviser and the singer-songwriter linchpin of Alex Rex, a roving vehicle for a multitude of creative mutations. Their fourth album is more irreverent and playful than its predecessors, and veers like a drunk. A gospel tune powered by a tinny drum machine (Lowlife), bloodied rock drama (Dancing Flame resembles his sensational Glaswegian forebear Alex Harvey) and a glam-garage racket – What's Shouted In The Dark (The Dark Shouts Back) quotes The Shangri-Las and Nick Lowe – are just three pitstops along this crooked path. High point: when Neilson hollers "I wear the knickers you gave me when I play football with the boys", in country-rock weepie Black Peonies.

Martin Aston

Chris Eckman

★★★★

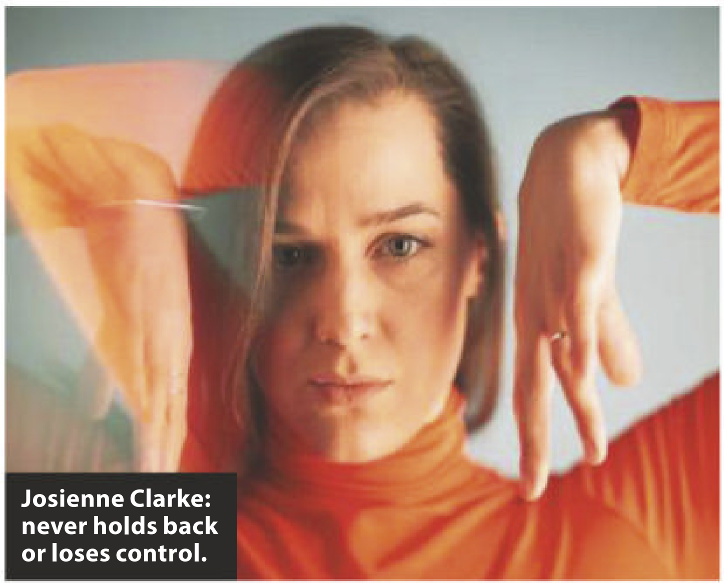
Where The Spirit Rests

GLITTERHOUSE. CD/DL/LP

One-time Walkabout's unlikely fifth solo album.

For the past eight years former Walkabouts leader Chris Eckman has concentrated on running his own label rather than playing guitar, let alone writing songs. Idle hands, however, will find the devil's work, and Eckman started reflecting on the displacement and dislocation of recent times. *Where The Spirit Rests* was recorded in the turret of a castle in Ljubljana, Slovenia, where both Eckman and producer Alastair McNeil (Róisín Murphy) live, and it's a mind's-eye image that sits well with the album's murky atmosphere. His voice, now a middle-aged croak where once it was, well, a younger man's rasp, recalls the swampy drawl of latter-day Tony Joe White, and so great is its gravitational pull that you barely notice the gentle arrangements as violin, pedal, bass and drums track the singer like benign stalkers. Very much an album for hiding in the shadows with.

Andy Fyfe



Josienne Clarke: never holds back or loses control.

Ellius Grace

Ishmael Ensemble

★★★★

Visions Of Light

SEVERN SONGS. DL/LP

Bristol experimental jazz collective's superlative second outing.

Pete Cunningham's Bristolian troupe channelled their city's eclectic musical history through 2019's debut *A State Of Flow*. If that album suffered from a slight lack of cohesiveness, the saxophonist and longstanding club DJ has ironed out the kinks on this sequel. From the dreamily slow evocation of Feather to the dark pulsing tension of Soma Centre and twitchy electronics of Morning Chorus, it's a step-up where all the tiny details matter. Thus, Holysseus Fly's soulful vocal turns are augmented by mysterious cameos from fellow Bristol scenesters STANLÆY and Tiny Chapter. Even when Ishmael Ensemble invoke other source material – standout Empty Hands headnods to Massive Attack's Protection – the collective take the piece somewhere unexpected, suffusing its flawless blend of astral jazz and state-of-art electronica with dancefloor savvy.

Andy Cowan

Son Volt

★★★★

Electro Melodier

TRANSIT SOUND/THIRTY TIGERS. CD/DL/LP

Two years on from *Union*, Jay Farrar and co's 10th long-player.

The title, which gear nerds will recognise as two fine vintage amplifiers, seems to point to this being another of Son Volt's retro-style records, where new original songs are loosely themed around one root of Americana or another: roadhouse country in *Honky Tonk*, (2013); blues in *Notes Of Blue*, (2017); updated protest songs on *Union* (2019). There's a lot of political/polemical lyrics here too. Musically, though, there is plenty going on: doomy folk-blues (War On Misery); sparse Woody Guthrie-esque folk (Livin' In The USA); slow, sad Sweet Refrain and The Levee On Down. There's also passionate, pissed-off, rousing country rock: The Globe, one of the album's highlights (it appears in two different versions) borrows the keyboard solo from The Who's Won't Get Fooled Again to drive home its point. Another highlight: the sentimental love song Diamonds And Cigarettes, featuring Laura Cantrell on backing vocals.

Sylvie Simmons

FOLK

BY COLIN IRWIN

John Francis Flynn

★★★★

I Would Not Live Always

RIVER LEA. CD/DL

Powerful leftfield take on tradition as the Irish march continues.

THE OBVIOUS routes are rarely the most fulfilling or enduring and Flynn – latest in an impressive line of Irish artists following in Lankum's footsteps to challenge the tried and trusted – offers an intriguing variant on familiar themes. Singer/guitarist/flautist with Skipper's Alley, Flynn goes for a hardy mix of tradition – Lovely Joan; Cannily, Cannily – plus a couple of MacColl songs (a great version of Come Me Little Son) and a haunting take on the great shanty Shallow Brown. The blend of occasionally wayward singing with disarming arrangements is remarkably effective. Sean-nós singer Saileog Ni Cheannabhain, Italian Consuelo Nerea Breschi (of the duo Varo) and keyboardist Phil Christie contribute to a dramatic underlay, completed by Ross Chaney's drums and a series of drones and tape loops. With occasional wall of sound explosions, it is formidably imposing, but this is its strength. The Bring Me Home trilogy towards the end is especially powerful.

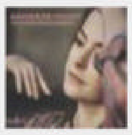
ALSO RELEASED

Katherine Priddy

★★★

The Eternal Rocks Beneath

NAVIGATOR. CD/DL



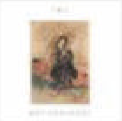
Big things are predicted for Priddy, a singer-songwriter from Birmingham with an ear for a good tune, a fetching couplet and intimate delivery. Her debut – which also reveals an aptitude for a chirpy blast of Americana – shows encouraging progress since winning the Raphael Award at Cambridge Folk Festival a couple of years ago. She's decently equipped to make her mark in an overcrowded field.

Trú

★★★

No Fixed Abode

DW. CD/DL/LP



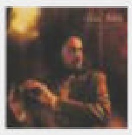
Trú (Donal Kearney, Michael Mormecha and Zach Trouton) have created quite a stir in Northern Ireland and this compelling debut shows why. Steeped in ancient folklore, they also bring many contrasting influences to the party – floating harmonies, joyous flute and understated percussion all give a modern edge. Brave, too, to re-work Dominic Behan's Patriot Game/Dylan's With God On Our Side into a Rebel Song for the modern era.

Adam Beattie

★★★

Somewhere Round The Bend

ADAM BEATTIE. CD/DL



The Scots singer-songwriter (late of Band Of Burns and PicaPica) shows off his dexterity with an uplifting, rather quirky selection of his own material. Seb Rochford adds genre-crushing percussion as Beattie's reveries of love and loss lead cheerily through smoky jazz, casual pop frippery and romantic balladry. Shades of Richard Hawley's lyrical sadness are offset by witty couplets, catchy tunes and offbeat arrangements.

Paul Hutchinson

★★★★

Petrichor

PH. CD/DL

A long-cherished project for this accordionist with Belshazzar's Feast and Pagoda Project – also a rattling tunesmith – this global album uses a range of multinational instrumentalists, among them Australian cellist Allye Sinclair, US violinist Shira Kammen, Belgians Naragonia, Swedish band Väsen and viola player Seona Pritchard. Recorded remotely, their diversity hangs together beautifully, with much charm and a hint of mischief. *CI*

Darkside

★★★★

Spiral

MATADOR. CD/DL/LP

Chilean electronica maestro and US multi-instrumentalist's second "jam band" adventure.

Darkside's essence is as uncanny, fluid and hard to pin down as its two members: Nicolas Jaar – a downbeat progressive DJ Shadow, perhaps? – and Dave Harrington, who use guitars and synths to connect post-rock dots between jazz, dub and electronica. More song-based than 2013 debut *Psychic*, *Spiral* slowly reveals a core mood, triangulated between Talk Talk, Radiohead and Pink Floyd (hence the name?) models of taut, blissful, trance-inducing rock, but often beat-driven. Whatever shape *Spiral* takes, the result is sublime. Narrow Road invents monastic trip-hop, Inside Is Out There throbs like Can, and Liberty Bell resembles a luminous Steely Dan. Jaar's soft, blurry voice is surprisingly durable, and opaque lyrics (from Spiral: "And if it went into a spiral, regardless of direction/ There I saw your face") add layers of intrigue and beauty.

Martin Aston

Jeffrey Alexander And The Heavy Lidders

★★★

Jeffrey Alexander And The Heavy Lidders

ARROWHAWK. DL/LP

Underground jammer puts all his faith in the Strength Of Strings.

Extreme productivity can be daunting, and Jeffrey Alexander has made so many records in the psych-folk margins that even experienced heads might struggle to know where to start. Super-obscure, too, given the closest he's been to the mainstream was as part of New Weird America freaks Jackie-O Motherfucker. After many, many albums anchoring Dire Wolves, though, this new venture is a terrific access point. Relocated from San Francisco to Philadelphia – and hooking up with fellow travellers like Elkhorn, Marissa Nadler and Pat Gubler – hasn't radically changed Alexander's MO: mostly, he still favours strung-out guitar jams that evoke Crazy Horse or Dinosaur Jr at their most languid and frazzled. But there's greater songcraft, economy and relative polish here, fine Gene Clark and Grateful Dead covers, and a charming curveball: Dark Ships In The Forest, swirling jangle-pop that suggests Alexander might know Felt as well as he does the hippy canon.

John Mulvey

Robbing Millions

★★★

Holidays Inside

MGMT/PIAS. CD/DL/LP

Belgian synth fruit loop inaugurates post-millennial pranksters' label.

ROBBING MILLIONS

MGMT's Andrew VanWyngarden describes his band's first label signatory, Lucien Fraipont, as possessing a "rare balance of experimentation, technical proficiency, and extreme catchiness". A one-man home studio opus concocted between Fraipont's kitchen in Belgium and producer Shags Chamberlain's facility in LA, Robbing Millions' second LP duly stretches 2021's preponderant sound of synth-driven 'bedroom pop' into unpredictable and sometimes uncomfortable shapes – usually within the same song. Its complex, ever-restless jazzy signatures, picked up during his training at the Conservatoire Royal de Bruxelles, mean that no single groove presides for longer than 20 seconds, while his extraordinary breadth of influence extends from bossa nova (Mont De Piète's latter half), right through cartoon muzak (Rapa Nui). As an album, *Holidays Inside* can be migraine-inducing, but when the odd Tame Impala-esque white soul nugget like Wild kicks in, the 'catchiness' component in VanWyngarden's equation hits home gloriously, if perhaps a touch frustratingly.

Andrew Perry

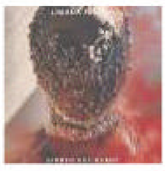
Lingua Ignota

★★★★

Sinner Get Ready

SARGENT HOUSE. CD/DL/LP

Big voiced experimentalist trades power electronics for reimagined Appalachia.



Across two LPs, collaboration with avant-metallers The Body and cathartic takes on doom-pop standards (Jolene, Wicked Game), multi-instrumentalist Kristin Hayter has won a devoted following for her self-described "survivor anthems" excoriating abusers. Lingua Ignota means "unknown language" and the classically trained singer/pianist duly evades categorisation, variously described as death industrial and liturgical noise. Hayter cites Diamanda Galas as an influence and shares her baroque intensity, albeit born of DIY basement shows rather than gothic concert halls. *Sinner Get Ready* spotlights the itinerant Californian's magnetic vocals by removing harsher textures, reflecting her move to rural Pennsylvania with a majestic palette of choral polyphony, crashing percussion and traditional porch and church sounds – banjo, bells, organ – synthetically, dramatically rewired. She's more lyrically expansive too, juxtaposing rich spiritual imagery with religious hypocrisy: sampling both disgraced televangelist Jimmy Swaggart, and the sex worker who exposed him.

Manish Agarwal

Horsey

★★★

Debonair

UNTITLED RECS. CD/DL/LP

Sinister south London quartet's deeply odd debut.

You'd be pushed to find 1:50 seconds more demonstrative than *Debonair*'s opener Sippy Cup, a crazed lounge-prog paean to "cool stuff" we enjoyed as kids. "Great to have Prefab Sprout back after that massive stroke", wrote one YouTube viewer beneath the accompanying gross-out video. Inaccurate, but still. Egged-on by George Bass's magnificent drumming, co lead-vocalists Theo McCabe and Jacob Read deal in graphic, madcap lyrics and deranged, sometimes threatening delivery – "Spoilt the milk? Fuck off!" begins edgy carny waltz Clown – but Horsey also do Joe Jackson-ish piano tunes (Lagoon), unhinged, Adrian Belew-like guitar leads (Arms & Legs), and warped, near-classical torch songs (1070). In places they're reminiscent of The Tiger Lillies' Brechtian punk cabaret, but Horsey are a different kind of unstable, their chutzpah and formidable beat-combo chops never far away.

James McNair

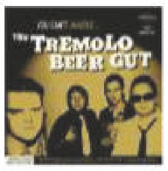
The Tremolo Beer Gut

★★★

You Can't Handle The Tremolo Beer Gut

CRUNCHY FROG. CD/DL/LP

Denmark's instro auteurs' fifth LP, with sleevenotes by David Fricke.



You Can't Handle… evokes 1964's wigged-out *The Ventures In Space* and The Marketts' *Out Of Limits!* from a year earlier. Both albums took the existing palette of American instrumental rock into orbit by incorporating echo and reverb. There are also nods to Link Wray – track seven is titled The Tremolo Death Wray – and, as acknowledged by Memento Morricone, spaghetti western sonics. The Tremolo Beer Gut are Danish, this is their fifth studio long-player and, as with its predecessors, the same photograph of the band is reprised for its cover. Friends cropping up on guitar or as spoken-voice interjectors include The Ravonettes' Sune Rose Wagner (who used to be in the band), Boss Hog/Pussy Galore's Cristina Martinez and Jon Spencer, and Flavia Couri of fellow Danish retro-rockers The Courettes. Exotic and surprising – an Erik Satie piece is recast in the chosen mode – it's also bags of fun.

Kieron Tyler

Torres

★★★★

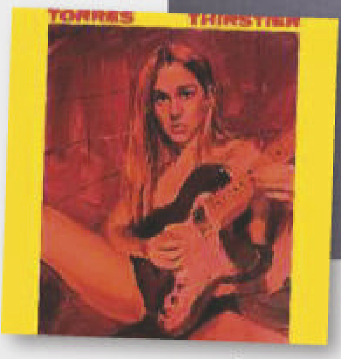
Thirstier

MERGE. CD/DL/LP

Florida-born songwriter's 10 new tracks "for post-plague celebration".

As Torres, Mackenzie Scott takes a big leap.

ALWAYS A moving target stylistically, Broadway musical and Fleetwood Mac fan Mackenzie Scott (AKA Torres) has previously tapped into folk, industrial rock, Krautrock and electronica among other genres. More electric guitar-leaning than last year's *Silver Tongue*, album five continues to shape-shift while cranking up the bombast and ambition. Hence Don't Go Puttin' Wishes In My Head, a bravura festival anthem-in-waiting up there with Sharon Van Etten's Seventeen, and the title track's hefty, passionate chorus, which seems to fall from the sky. Such commercial flashes are tempered with delicious curveballs like Kiss The Corners, a spare beat-box confection with deft and beguiling vocals, and the confessional, quietly mesmerising Big Leap. Billed as an intense study of love "from all angles" – romantic, platonic, familial etc. – *Thirstier* comes on like a bold, heady catharsis.



James McNair

Shervin Lainez

WOLO SO
BALIMAYA PROJECT

Balimaya Project

★★★★

Wolo So

JAZZ RE:FRESHED. DL/LP

Big band's debut splices West African Mandé music with modern British jazz.

It's taken half a decade for Family Atlantica and Maisha's djembe player Yahael Camara Onono to realise his grand musical vision. *Wolo So's* intricate creations are life-affirming proof the logistical headaches were worth it. Having set out their vigorous stall with the ungovernable kora and balafon-led groove of Balimaya (a spicy riff on the traditional Salia), the percussive textural mêlée that runs deep throughout doesn't preclude diversions, whether it's their hard-punching horn section painting more contemplative pictures on the laidback City Of God, or a fluttering vocal cameo from Mariam Tounkara Koné on Soninka that teems with emotive power. If comparisons to Fela Kuti's Africa 70 or Egypt 80 are unavoidable, they're also apt – Balimaya Project are primed to slay all-comers in a festival setting.

Andy Cowan

Big Big Train

★★★

Common Ground

ENGLISH ELECTRIC. CD/DL/LP

The prog revivalists caught in reflective mood.

If you're a BBT fan eager for another hit of retro-prog excellence you'll need some patience. Oddly, the opening tunes here are the weakest. Even with track three, the mostly thoroughly effective Black With Ink, you have to not mind the opening's startling resemblance to Kim Wilde's Kids In America. But, hey, what's a prog fan without patience? And happily, from then on the band deliver: there's a historical epic and an anthemic instrumental that combine the band's virtues of technical skill and melodicism. The title track has an XTC-like playfulness, but best of all are two contemplative songs from the band's founder, Gregory Spawton, forged during a year of introspection. Dandelion Clock and Endnotes are quite unlike his usual third-person tales – melancholy has rarely sounded so seductive.

John Bungey

Willy Mason

★★★★

Already Dead

COOKING VINYL. CD/DL/LP

Missing-in-action New York singer-songwriter's fourth album; a welcome return.

When his first album, *Where The Humans Eat*, snuck into the British Top 40 in 2005, Willy Mason's snappy, literate pop seemed set to take hold. Instead, he faded, before disappearing to his Martha's Vineyard lair to teach music and resurface intermittently. Equally weary and inspired, *Already Dead* is a reminder of how special Mason could be, declaring "You can't kill me; I'm already dead" on the opening Youth On A Spit, before embarking upon what seems like a road trip across the rubble of a broken land on You'd Like To Be Free and the excoriating but haunting centrepiece Oh My Country ("flag's all frayed"). And yet, with his slightly sardonic, slightly Randy Newman approach, he's peculiarly uplifting on the jaunty One Of The Good Ones and insistently hummable Outwit The Devil.

John Aizlewood

Willy Mason: facing up to a grave situation.

Mike Palmer, Ebru Yildiz

Cots

★★★

Disturbing Body

BOILED. DL/LP

Downbeat bossa nova from Canadian multi-disciplinary artist Steph Yates.

Unsurprisingly for one who spent time in Brazil making books, Steph Yates has embraced bossa nova, but infused it with rue. As Cots, she has married that stylistic twist to a sheen of under-the-radar peculiarity similar to that of avant-garde Toronto producer Sandro Perri. Featuring her own *papier-mâché* sculpture on the cover, *Disturbing Body* lasts for less than half an hour, but it's a fascinating English language affair which evokes both the sophistication of Everything But The Girl's *Eden* and the sadness of Portuguese fado. Pitched somewhere between Billie Eilish and Elis Regina, Yates's up-front vocals dominate. She brings a lonesome feel to the title track, which relates interplanetary pull to human attraction before the bass solo kicks in, and there's bleakness to spare on the dystopian Midnight At The Station. Behind her, there is lush minimalism, percussion rather than drums, and an overpowering sense of quiet despair.

John Aizlewood

Various

★★★★

Modern Love

BBE. CD/DL/LP

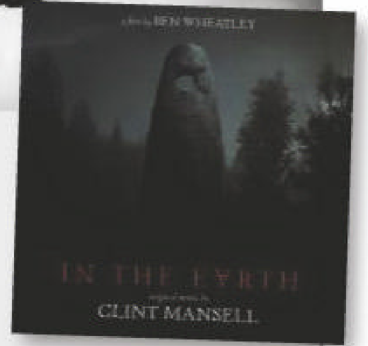
Expansive tribute set seeks connections between David Bowie and black music.

The jazz influences coursing through David Bowie's final LP, *Blackstar*, inspired DJ Drew McFadden to dream up these adventurous covers, corralling dance acts happy to stray from their chosen stations. Whether its Houston psych-rockers Khruangbin bringing their languid atmospherics to Right, Jeff Parker and daughter Ruby riding dreamy swathes of loops and samples on Soul Love, or the high-register caramel vocals of Jonah Mutono's entrancing Modern Love, misses are few, re-proving their creator's genius. Emulating Bowie's fearlessness is another matter. Yet the jazz quartet improv of ex-BADBADNOTGOOD man Matthew Tavares' take on Heroes, jettisoning the original's theatrics, or the palpable nervous tension São Paulo singer Sessa brings to Panic In Detroit, restyled as a João Gilberto bossa nova shuffle, wholly satisfy the brief.

Andy Cowan

SOUNDTRACKS

BY ANDREW MALE



Clint Mansell

★★★★★

In The Earth

INVADA. CD/DL/LP

Possible career peak for the Coventry-born film composer.

FOLLOWING HIS disappointingly bland adaptation of Daphne Du Maurier's Rebecca, English horror auteur Ben Wheatley has returned with a short, savage eco-nightmare that almost recaptures the grimy claustrophobia of his early work. But if In The Earth occasionally feels like a classic it is almost certainly down to Mansell's *unheimlich kosmische* score. Moving from the hazy electronic chorales of prime Popol Vuh and the analogue blood pulse of '80s-era Tangerine Dream, Mansell then starts to develop themes within the film, playing with sonic frequencies that seem to have an unsettling psychological effect on your inner ear. Wheatley, to his credit, has created narrative spaces for Mansell's score that allow it to assume the status of an unseen central character, a demonic aural presence that invests the film with a complex uneasy depth. It's playing in my front room now and I feel like I'm not alone.

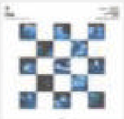
ALSO RELEASED

Various

★★★

Imaginal Soundtracking Vol 2

PHANTOM LIMB. DL



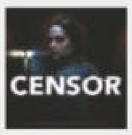
Second in this series of re-scored classics finds Japanese musicians Ami Dang, Midori Hirano, Foodman, Sabiwa and Tori Kudo drawing inspiration from Kihachiro Kawamoto's 1972 stop-motion animation The Demon. The five tracks range from psychedelic sitar to jerky percussive chaos and a piano played in a noisy front room, windows open to bird song and passing cars.

Emilie Levienaise-Farrouch

★★★

Censor

INVADA. CD/DL/LP



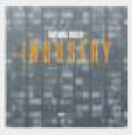
This London-based French composer primarily works in the modern classical field of delicate, intimate, understated acoustic ambience. For her score to Prano Bailey-Bond's postmodern video nasty, she concentrates almost purely on sonorous drones and a sustained low-pitch resonance that perfectly fits the slow-burn crack-up of the film.

Nathan Micay

★★★

Industry

LUCKYME. CD/DL/LP



This Toronto electronic composer has been labelled everything from "post-dubstep" to "prog house". Here he approaches HBO's 2020 dog-eat-dog, high-finance mini-series almost as a post-modern exercise in classical tropes, referencing everything from Vangelis's Chariots Of Fire to Tangerine Dream's soundtrack to the 1983 Tom Cruise sex comedy Risky Business.

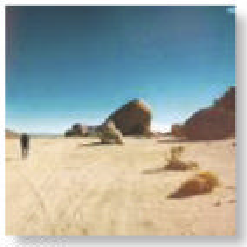
Gazelle Twin & Max de Wardener

★★★★

The Power

INVADA. CD/DL/LP

Given Corinna Faith's haunted hospital drama is set during the UK power cuts of 1974, perhaps it is understandable that Elizabeth Bernholz and Max de Wardener would reference UK scores of the '70s such as Death Line and The Shout. However, the real genius here belongs to Bernholz, who layers her own voice to create nightmare lattices of wordless, euphoric fear. *AM*



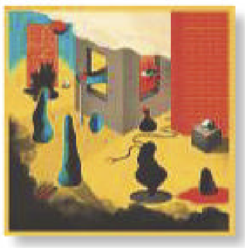
299

★★★

The 299 Game

PNKSLM. DL/LP

Noted Welsh musician Gavin Fitzjohn (Gruff Rhys, Manics) reveals the best ersatz dust-bowl drawl since Jagger spied a little red rooster. Corralling bedroom blues signifiers from Beck to Lee Hazlewood, he adds his own melodic grit. Well schooled, but still way cool. *KC*



Arthhur

★★★

Occult Fractures

BACK TO THE LIGHT. CD/DL

Rubbery, postpunk dance from Chicago trio who stake out the hitherto barren land between A Certain Ratio and Duran Duran for their second LP of bass line funk with high-tensile punk attitude. Highlight: dancefloor life coach agitation from Ripped And Dumb. *JB*

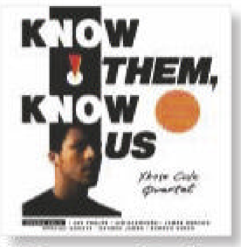
Jade Bird

★★★

Different Kinds Of Light

GLASSNOTE. CD/DL/LP

Partly inspired by Stevie Nicks, Croydon-born Bird's Nashville-made second LP lines up well with Christine McVie's songs too: highly polished, rootsy but gently rocking with some big hooks, even if the quality wavers a little over 15 tracks. *JB*



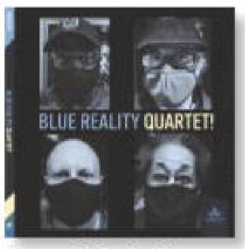
Xhosa Cole

★★★★

K(no)w Them, K(no)w Us

STONEY LANE. CD/DL/LP

Soweto Kinch and Reuben James (piano) join Handsworth tenor Cole on a covers set that lets his technique shine. Fiery interplay on Woody Shaw's Zoltan and Monk's Played Twice is offset by a silky take on Rodgers & Hart's Manhattan. *AC*



Joe McPhee, Michael Marcus, Jay Rosen, Warren Smith

★★★

Blue Reality Quartet!

MAHAKALA MUSIC. CD/DL

Unconventional two reeds/two percussionists jazz meet on a set that has much strangeness but no little charm. *AC*

Noctiferia

★★★★

Reforma – Tribute To Laibach

NIKA. CD/DL/LP

Tremble as Slovenian black metallers Noctiferia bring rock superdensity to eight blasts of geopolitical chaos by Laibach. A neat fit with guests such as Sunn O)))'s Attila Csihar, even if the source material is where the purest madness resides. *IH*

Jim Noir

★★★★

Deep Blue View

DOOK RECORDINGS. DL/LP

Having effectively ditched his Beatles/'60s psych-pop obsessions, Noir dives deeper into moody lounge on a dreamy symphonic suite, offset by thrummed Melody Nelson bass, rich lead lines supply ample melodic balm when its blue moods turn tail. *AC*

ALL WELCOME ON PLANET REE-VO

Ree-Vo

★★★★

All Welcome On Planet Ree-Vo

DELL'ORSO. CD/DL/LP

Rapper T Relly and producer Andy Spaceland's gripping debut plays stylistic hopscotch in Bristol's low-end dance history. Peppered with old school film lifts, their electro-hop wriggles and writhes on We Go and Combat. *AC*

University Challenged

★★★★

Oh Temple!

HIVE MIND. DL/LP

Melding amplifier hum, astral guitar reveries and electronic wizardry, dreamy ambient instrumentals from Holland-based trio, led by Ajay Saggar, peak with Choppers Over Negril, as dubby sonics, bass and toasting gatecrash the bliss. *SC*

Various

★★★★

Train Driver In Eyeliner

INDUSTRIAL COAST. MC/ST

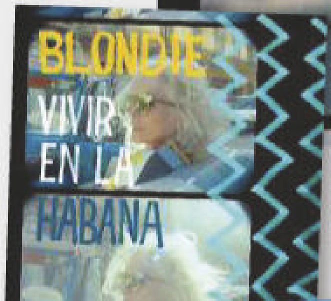
The late Nick Sanderson (Gun Club, JAMC) fronted infamous '90s art-crims Earl Brutus: marking his 60th birthday, admirers including Jim Reid, Saint Etienne and Luke Haines reinterpret the EB catalogue with exuberance. Monies to Cancer Research UK. *CP*

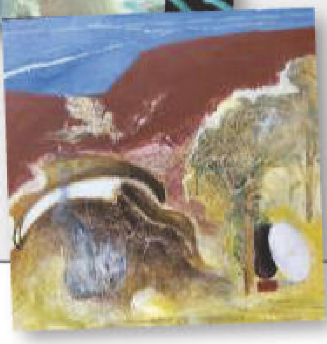
EXTENDED PLAY

Diversions

Short form releases are a great vehicle in which to take a brief conceptual diversion without leaving your core audience too far behind, and so it is that **Shirley Collins**' Crowlink EP (Domino) – named after both an East Sussex coastal path and the closing track of 2020's *Heart's Ease* album – pitches Collins' soft-sung wisdom against a backdrop of Matthew Shaw's local field recordings on five decidedly non-traditional songs. The Rose And The Briar takes Barbara Allen on that clifftop walk as the sea roars beneath; the effect is intense and emotional. More celebratory is **Blondie**'s blue vinyl EP soundtrack to a short film made in 2019 of their cultural exchange to Cuba, Vivir En La Habana (BMG). Six live, sonically immaculate tracks include a brilliantly Latinised version of 2011's Wipe Off My Sweat and The Tide Is High recast in vibrant brass. As its title suggests, Irish composer **Paddy Mulcahy**'s Tidal Oscillations EP (XXIM Records) explores the boundless ambient possibilities of systems music pioneers like Terry Riley in its reticulated synthscapes. Meanwhile, **Federico Albanese & Tara Nome Doyle**'s silvery, jazz-schooled piano ballads on The Moments We Keep EP (Mercury KX), were inspired by Virginia Woolf's writing on future memory sensation.

Sonically immaculate: Blondie's Cuban trip.





Watchhouse

Watchhouse

★★★★

Watchhouse

THIRTY TIGERS. CD/DL/LP

Opening with Harry Nilsson-like lullaby Wondrous Love, former Mandolin Orange duo celebrate the highs of new parenthood in all its dazed, anxious tenderness. Highlights: Upside Down's loping folk rock; the Appalachian poetry of Lonely Love Affair or Nightbird. *JB*

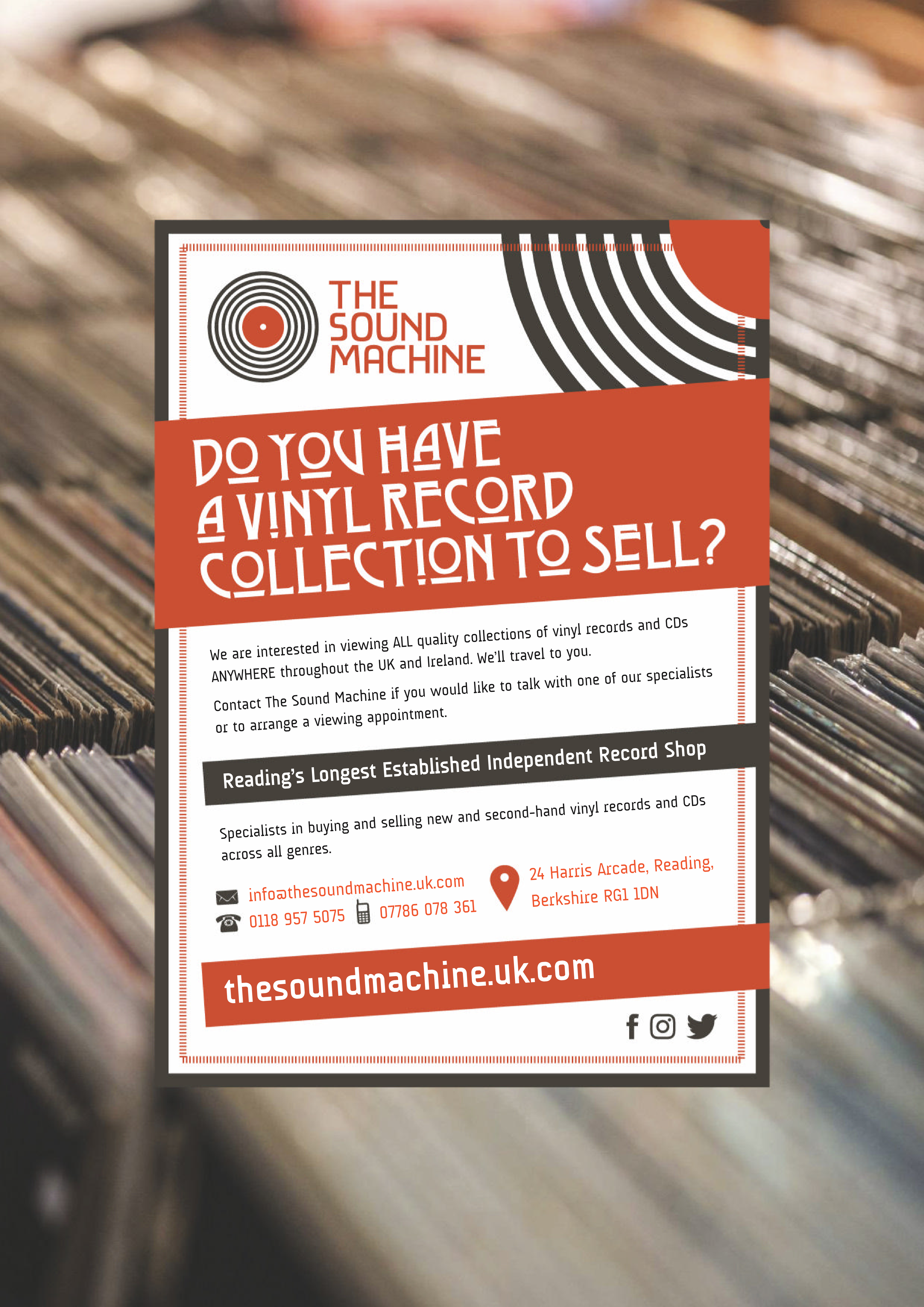
Wilma Vritra

★★★★

Grotto

BAD TASTE. CD/DL/LP

Geordie producer Wilma Archer and Odd Future co-founder Pyramid Vritra's second duo LP is an unhurried sweep through jazz, soul, yacht rock and ambient. Swooping strings and left-of-centre beats underscore raps centred on self-preservation and redemption. *AC*



THE SOUND MACHINE

DO YOU HAVE A VINYL RECORD COLLECTION TO SELL?

We are interested in viewing ALL quality collections of vinyl records and CDs ANYWHERE throughout the UK and Ireland. We'll travel to you.

Contact The Sound Machine if you would like to talk with one of our specialists or to arrange a viewing appointment.

Reading's Longest Established Independent Record Shop

Specialists in buying and selling new and second-hand vinyl records and CDs across all genres.

✉ info@thesoundmachine.uk.com
☎ 0118 957 5075 📱 07786 078 361

24 Harris Arcade, Reading,
Berkshire RG1 1DN

thesoundmachine.uk.com

Tide and emotional

A long-promised box set tells the complete story of the *Sunflower* and *Surf's Up* era. By **John Mulvey**.

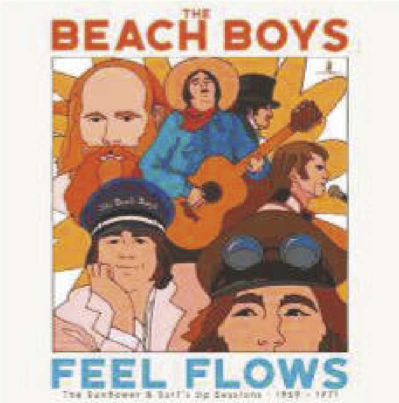
The Beach Boys

★★★★

Feel Flows: The Sunflower & Surf's Up Sessions 1969-1971

CAPITOL/UME. CD/DL/LP

"WE'RE JUST updating ourselves a little," Al Jardine told NME in November 1970, as The Beach Boys arrived in Britain on tour. A month earlier, the band had played the Big Sur Folk Festival, realigning themselves with the hippies and roots music fans who'd long found their music anathema. A week earlier, The Beach Boys had headlined a series of dates at Los Angeles's Whisky A Go-Go, as part of a plan by their new manager Jack Rieley to make them, of all things, "hip". The preppy stage outfits had been retired; the beards were getting longer. Environmental politics would be a priority. And while the working title for that August's *Sunflower* had been dropped, the sentiments remained an imperative: *The Fading Rock Group Revival*.


THE BEACH BOYS
FEEL FLOWS
The Sunflower & Surf's Up Sessions · 1969-1971

"Brian forces Love to sing, 'Doughy lumps, stomach pumps, enemas too.'"

Sunflower and *Surf's Up*, the albums The Beach Boys released in 1970 and 1971, found them at a challenging inflection point, even by their standards. A new record deal with Warner Bros had resulted in one submitted album, *Add Some Music*, being rejected by label head Mo Ostin, only to be overhauled as *Sunflower*. That proved to be a commercial disaster, too. Brian Wilson rarely ventured outdoors, so recording sessions took place at his home on Bellagio Drive, Bel Air, in the "man cave" directly beneath his bedroom. His bandmates, though, were unexpectedly flourishing as songwriters. Via revamped albums and aborted solo projects, The Beach Boys suddenly found themselves blessed, or cursed, with a surfeit of new material.

BACK STORY: WAYWARD SUN

● With six band-members all contributing songs, the early '70s Beach Boys had plenty of material to be getting on with. But *Feel Flows* also contains a clutch of eccentric covers: an exceptionally groggy Over The Waves, an 1888 waltz by the Mexican composer Juventino Rosas; The Beatles' You Never Give Me Your Money, rescored as a brief Moog instrumental; and Seasons In The Sun, the Jacques Brel tear-jerker, produced by Terry Jacks (above). When The Beach Boys, bereft of hits, shelved their version, Jacks ran with it himself to score a worldwide Number 1.

Iconic Artists Group LLC_Brother Records, Getty

Not ideal for a band struggling with internal democracy, perhaps, but perfect for box set compilers half a century on. Hence *Feel Flows*, a 5-CD survey of this rich and complex Beach Boys phase. Across these five discs, you get *Sunflower* and *Surf's Up* remastered, 11 live tracks (dating from 1970 to 1993), a cappellas, session outtakes, radio ads and a whole heap of formally unreleased songs, some of which might be familiar from the long-cherished *Landlocked* bootleg.

If there's a dominant Beach Boy here it's Carl Wilson, a natural peacemaker acting as executive producer with Brian only sporadically engaged. But while Carl's Long Promised Road and Feel Flows nailed the mature, aware sound the band were aiming for on *Surf's Up*, his songwriting contributions were sparse. The Beach Boys vault, though, is full of Dennis tracks, and *Feel Flows* makes a great showcase for that Wilson's unlikely gifts, and the inconsistent strategies that bedevilled the band.

On *Sunflower*, Dennis has four songs, including It's About Time, as ferocious a rocker as anything in their canon, and Forever, a ballad of surprising tenderness that stands comparison with *Pet Sounds*-era Brian. Two more from the period cruelly missed the cut: San Miguel, bracing revivalism in the vein of Do It Again; and Celebrate The News, a woozy baroque piece surfacing early as Break Away's B-side in 1969.

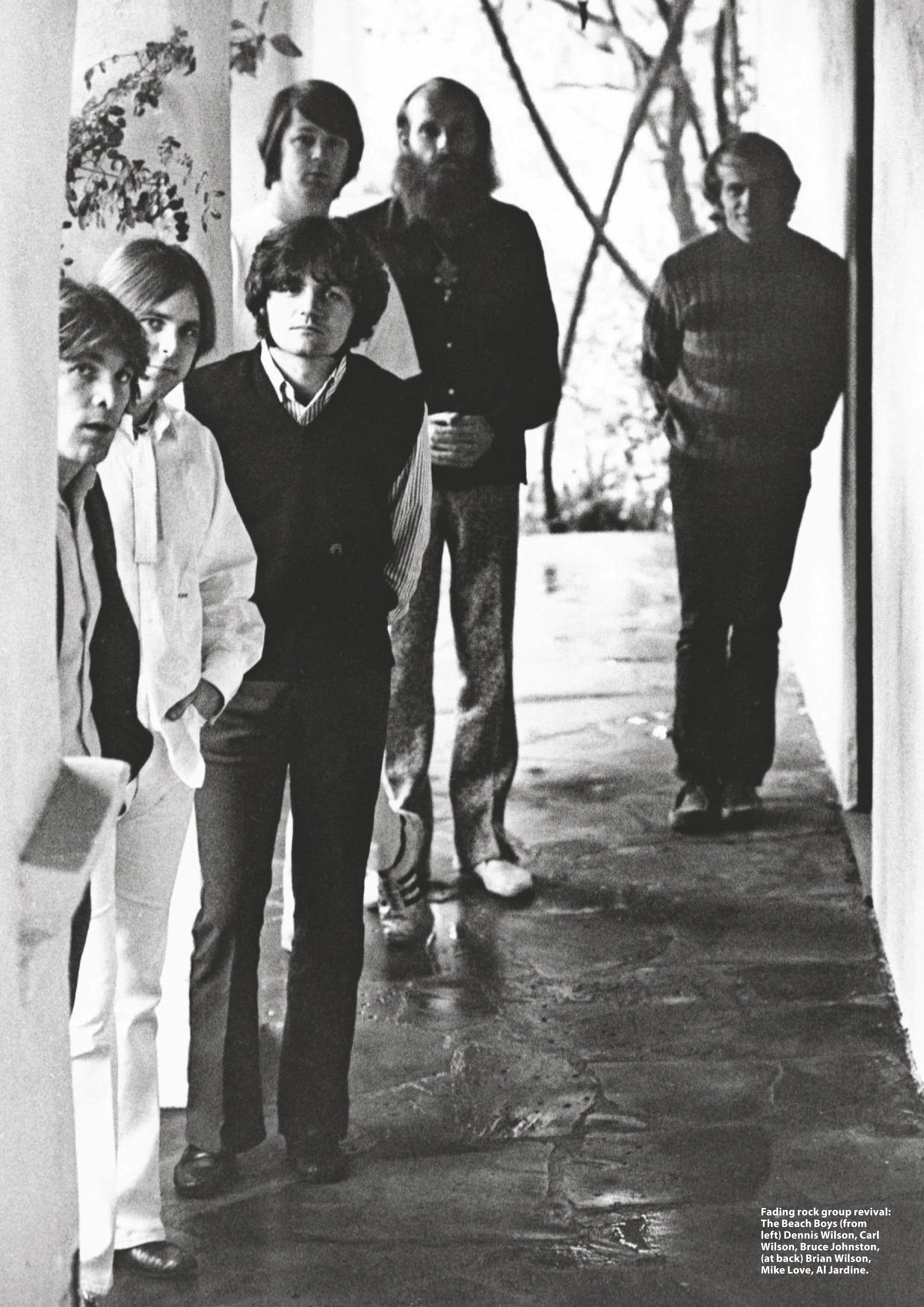
Surf's Up, though, featured none of Dennis's songs, hoarded for a solo project that only manifested one superb 1971 single, Sound Of Free/Lady (both, fortunately, included here). The material Dennis was working on would've suited the ambience of *Surf's Up*, privileging as it did a kind of mystical California grandeur over boardwalk kitsch. The harpsichord-anchored Behold The Night, Medley: All Of My Love/Ecology, Before – these songs marked a line in the sand. While spiritual intensity had been Brian's terrain in the late '60s, now it belonged to Dennis. It would take him until 1977, and *Pacific Ocean Blue*, to make that explicit.

His bandmates were not always so cosmically inclined, or invested in the advantages of hipness. Al Jardine quietly excelled as a foil to Brian when the latter roused himself, collaborating on cutesy and occasionally misogynistic (Susie Cincinnati; Good Time) trinkets. Bruce Johnston's high-grade schmaltz favoured nostalgia for the pre-rock'n'roll era rather than empathy with '70s progressives: in the Tootsie Roll fantasia of Disney Girls (1957), he sounds blissfully ready for retirement, at 29. And Mike Love, that most belligerent of Transcendental Meditators, was busy fomenting obedience on Student Demonstration Time. "I thought the atmospherics at these concerts [like Woodstock] – the drugs, the mayhem, at times the violence – were getting out of hand," he writes in his 2016 memoir.

Brian, meanwhile, was more productive than his sedentary retreat might have suggested. In *Feel Flows*' sleevenotes, Jardine remembers their notional leader drawn downstairs by the Moog being used on Cool, Cool Water. Some of his contributions were extracted from *Smile*, like the hook from Love To Say Dada on Cool, Cool Water, or the extraordinary Surf's Up. Elsewhere, the banality of Brian's oddness can be unnerving. My Solution is a novelty Halloween song that's like a cross between *Smile*'s Elements Suite and Bobby 'Boris' Pickett's Monster Mash. H.E.L.P. Is On Its Way, ostensibly an ad for a health food restaurant, at least forces Love to sing the line, "Doughy lumps, stomach pumps, enemas too."

This wouldn't be The Beach Boys, though, if beauty didn't emerge amidst the frat boy gags and psychological trauma. Won't You Tell Me is an engulfing romantic melodrama akin to Please Let Me Wonder, credited to Brian and his father Murry Wilson and originally recorded in 1965 by The Sunrays. Reclaimed by The Beach Boys in '71, it appears here in two versions: as a lavish, chiming Brian and Carl duet; and as a solo Brian demo, with control room interjections from his father that only enhance the pathos.

Then, of course, there's Til I Die. In Brian Wilson's untrustworthy 1991 autobiography, Wouldn't It Be Nice, he claims the song was written after he'd "ordered the gardener to dig a grave in the backyard and threatened to drive my Rolls off the Santa Monica pier." *Feel Flows* is full of little revelations, glimpses of The Beach Boys' haphazardly evolving, still magical process in the early '70s. None, though, hit as hard as a long (4:47) version of Til I Die, with a two-minute vibraphone intro that magnifies its otherworldly shimmer, and significantly different lyrics. Instead of "How deep is the ocean/I lost my way," Brian sings, "How deep is the ocean/That holds me up," and in the next verse, replaces "It kills my soul" with "I've found my way", the song recast as a calmer reckoning with mortality. The door out of the bedroom was there all along, but it would take years for Brian Wilson to consistently locate it.



Fading rock group revival: The Beach Boys (from left) Dennis Wilson, Carl Wilson, Bruce Johnston, (at back) Brian Wilson, Mike Love, Al Jardine.

Juana Molina

★★★★

Segundo

CRAMMED DISCS. CD/DL/LP

Argentinian TV star turned home electronics diva's breakthrough release.

First emerging in late 2000 but not released in the UK (by Domino) until three years later, *Segundo* hailed the emergence of a singular talent, and with original copies commanding absurd prices, this loving but rigorous remaster restores the shock of the new to a record which has aged stunningly well. *Segundo* is bewitching, combining the leafy intimacy of the best Laurel Canyon-era recordings of Joni Mitchell or Graham Nash with the frontier technological innovations of Delia Derbyshire. On Mantra Del Bicho Feo, woozy vocal washes coalesce into heavy duty dance beats before subsiding happily into birdsong codas. El Desconfiado's brief lapse into English is done with such delicacy that it seems to happen inside the listener's head, not outside. And the dog happily running wild in the mix of El Perro barks for all of us.

Ben Thompson

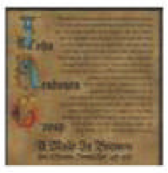
The John Renbourn Group

★★★

A Maid In Bremen

MIGMUSIC. CD/DL

Post-Pentangle 1978 live set from guitarist satisfies his new passion for Early Music.



What do you do when your all-conquering folk-jazz fusion supergroup finally falls apart in madness, confusion and no little acrimony? For an explorative guitarist such as John Renbourn, it was simple – dust yourself down, get a new band together and start again, delving into a growing passion for Early Music. Capturing a sanguine concert performance in Bremen, there is an almost shy sense of adventure as Renbourn and Jacqui McShee carry some of Pentangle's melting pot of styles to incorporate the fiery flute and oboe of Tony Roberts, Keshav Sathe's lively tabla and American Sandy Spencer's cello. McShee's singing is characteristically serene in her comfort zone on ballads like Will Of Winsbury, Cruel Sister and The Maid On The Shore, but the collective is more interesting when stretching itself on Booker T. & The M.G.'s Sweet Potato, the old Furry Lewis blues number Turn Your Money Green and Renbourn's Incredible String Band-flavoured To Glastonbury, even if the tabla solo seems to go on for ever.

Colin Irwin

Various

★★★★★

Fire Over Babylon

SOUL JAZZ. CD/2-LP/DL

Yet more top-quality dread, peace and conscious sounds at Studio One.

FIRE OVER BABYLON

London's Soul Jazz label started compiling the limitless treasures discovered in Studio One's archive 20 years ago. Initially, stylish compilations *à la* their own *100% Dynamite* (see *Rockers*, *Scorcher* etc), or else genre sets (*Ska*, *Rocksteady*), lately they have followed the three volumes in their *Roots* series with several tilts at *Black Man's Pride*, and now this excellent set, all documenting the abundance of outstanding roots recorded by reggae's foundation label. As Soul Jazz label-boss Stuart Baker's righteous notes attest, Studio One supremo Clement Dodd was more than just an entrepreneur: descended from the rebel Maroons, he would often visit Rasta camps to take part in 'reasoning' sessions, and thus 'felt' an impassioned chant such as Cedric Brooks and Count Ossie's Give Me Back Me Language And Me Culture, and, indeed, the radical ire of Freddie McGregor's I Am A Revolutionist. With further deep cuts aboard from The Gladiators, Wailing Souls, Horace Andy and others, *Fire Over Babylon* is from the very top drawer.

Andrew Perry

Hodges, James, Smith (& Crawford)

Hodges, James, Smith (& Crawford)

★★★★

Early Years And Unheard Pearls 1970-1973

KENT. CD/DL

Superb corralling of the Los Angeles/Detroit vocal outfit's '70s soul recordings.

Ex-Motown staffer Mickey Stevenson worked church singers Pat Hodges, Denita James and Jessica Smith hard. Daily rehearsal sessions from one to three hours and a gruelling live schedule honed their vocal wall of sound – powerful gospel leads, often by Hodges, and sweet but tough harmonising - to perfection. Lessons in etiquette, meanwhile, produced a trio capable of seducing the crowd at the Copa. When Carolyn Crawford joined for 1971's *Nobody* and 1972's *Let's Pick Up The Pieces* – real jewel-in-the-crown girl group soul albums – they should have soared. Maybe their unwieldy moniker put people off, but their unissued material collected here is also impressive, in particular the effusive Wishful Thinking and empowerment anthem-in-the-making Nothing Special In You Boy.

Lois Wilson

Various

★★★★★

Rip It Up: The Best Of Specialty Records

CRAFT. CD/DL/LP

It's the 75th anniversary of Art Rupe's pioneering Los Angeles label.

The wildest screams and pounding beats of Little Richard, Larry Williams and Lloyd Price, the velvet tones of Sam Cooke and Percy Mayfield, the boogie and swing of Roy Milton and Jimmy Liggins, the Specialty sides on Art Rupe's label in the '50s were seed, root and shoots of rock'n'roll. Little Richard's Long Tall Sally, Tutti Frutti and title track reassembled R&B, blues, gospel and jazz fragments into a fresh, pulsating, riotous and fast-evolving form that became the template for the punchy 4/4 sound that's still with us. As Billy Vera's fascinating linernote points out, drummer/singer Roy Milton's microphone leaked snare drum into the mix, adding muscle to the backbeat. Rock'n'roll was here to stay. For those who want a more detailed history, 1994's 5-CD *The Specialty Story* is now also available digitally. Art Rupe, by the way, is still alive and will be 104 in September.

Geoff Brown

Brian Setzer

★★★

Setzer Goes Instru-MENTAL

SURFDOG. LP

On vinyl, the Stray Cat's first ever instrumental album.

Originally released in 2011 and earning a Grammy nomination for Best Pop Instrumental Album, *Setzer Goes Instru-MENTAL* saw the Stray Cats man strip things way back after a string of releases with his sizeable rockabilly-goes-swing ensemble The Brian Setzer Orchestra. Largely an audience with Setzer, a vintage Gretsch or two and the odd overdub, it charms most on tunes such as Intermission and Lonesome Road, wherein his approach seems mindful/appreciative of Les Paul's pioneering, *joie de vivre*-filled, early 1950s recordings with Mary Ford. Though virtuosity for virtuosity's sake occasionally bubbles-up and detracts, Setzer's encyclopaedic facility with the tones and techniques of evocative, primordial guitar is clear. Twanging spy theme Far Noir East, surf rev-up Hot Love and slap-back work-out Pickpocket all hit the spot.

James McNair

P.J. Harvey & John Parish

★★★★

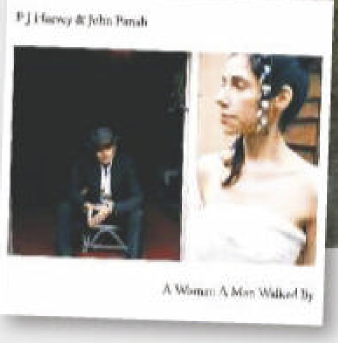
A Woman A Man Walked By

UMC/ISLAND. LP

Longtime collaborators rampage through second album together.

John Parish and P.J. Harvey, ready to flex muscles.

Maria Mochnacz



TWELVE YEARS after their first formal collaboration, *Dance Hall At Louse Point*, P.J. Harvey and her old Automatic Dlamini bandmate (and enduring wingman) John Parish regrouped for 2009's *A Woman A Man Walked By*. Positioned between two of Harvey's career highs – 2007's *White Chalk* and 2011's *Let England Shake* – it's more chapbook than broadsheet, a raw-edged, unbleached set of songs. Parish's febrile, theatrical music is completed by Harvey's wild lyrics and cartwheeling vocals; moments of semi-comic purging (Pig Will Not; A Woman A Man Walked By/The Crow Knows Where All The Little Children Go) are tempered by Black Hearted Love's red-blooded grunge, Sixteen, Fifteen, Fourteen's uncanny hide-and-seek or the Tindersticks spoken word of Cracks In The Canvas. The Soldier, meanwhile, grimly signposts *Let England Shake*. At best, it still sounds like a necessary flexing of muscles, an exuberant trust-fall between artists at home in each other's company.

Victoria Segal

Times revisited: Prince's next push for freedom.

© The Prince Estate / Phoro by Mike Ruiz

We The Purple

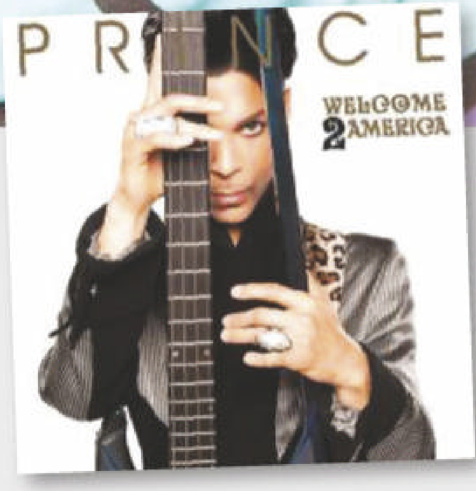
An unforeseen burst of funky social commentary from The Vault. By **Danny Eccleston**.

Prince

★★★★

Welcome 2 America

SONY LEGACY. CD/DL/LP



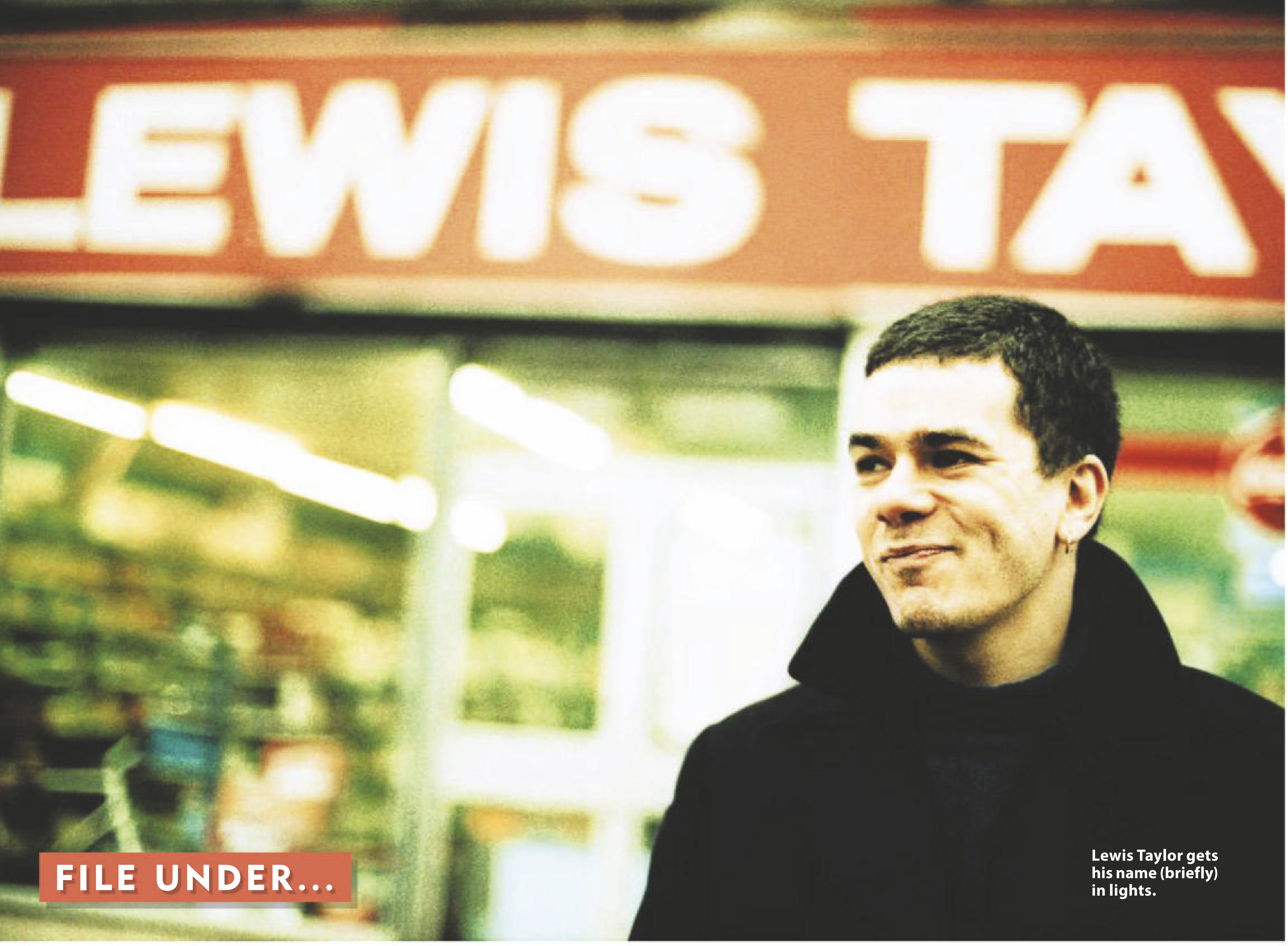
MANY PRINCE fans will have foreseen some of the secret gems to have emerged so far from The Vault (notably, 2020's bumper *Sign 'O' The Times*). Few but the most devoted or insider-informed, however, are likely to have expected an unheard belter from as late as 2010, seemingly contemporaneous with the sub-par *20Ten*, a freebie given away with the Daily Mirror and deemed "as good as *Purple Rain*"… by the Daily Mirror.

Because *Welcome 2 America* is classic Prince, built on a band – Tal Wilkenfeld on bass, Chris Coleman on drums, Morris Hayes on keyboards – that turns out to have been his most straightforwardly funky since 1988's *Lovesexy*, and with similar nods to Parliament-Funkadelic. The opening title track is Prince's Chocolate City: dark, loping and carrying a spoken-word litany of American ills – greed, corruption, tech-overload – leavened by wit and wordplay. Meanwhile, the exquisite Born 2 Die is a soul-stirring Curtis Mayfield homage, replete with soft falsetto, wah wah, and a killer chorus.

This is *Sign 'O' The Times* territory – Prince looking to articulate funky social commentary in the style of black music's '70s pioneers. The low-riding Running Game (Son Of A Slave Master) complains of the white entertainment industry's ownership of black artists. 1,000 Light Years From Here imagines a society free of inequality, perhaps under the ocean, way in the future. Maybe Prince, notorious for shelving music he decided was too negative (cf. *The Black Album*), thought all this too much of a bummer to lay on 2010. Or more likely, he just got distracted by the next day's brilliant idea.

When Prince wanders from the funk path the results are more mixed. The new wave pop of Hot Summer could bear an extra polish. Of the ballads, Stand Up And B Strong, a cover of a 2006 Soul Asylum song, is more than a bit soppy. Possibly, we get too much of co-singers Liv Warfield, Shelby J. and Elisa Fiorillo. Yet there's strength in *Welcome 2 America*'s commitment to the idea of the Classic Prince Album (again, *Lovesexy* comes to mind): a multi-hued merging of funk and pop and rock and soul into something *sui generis*, and it's epitomised by closer One Day We Will All B Free. A reprise of the album's political theme and the mid-'70s R&B milieu in which it is most comfortable, it's also one of the great Prince songs.

A fancy-schmancy Deluxe Edition of *Welcome 2 America* includes a 24-track Blu-ray of an April 28, 2011 Prince show at Inglewood, California, part of a 21-night stop on his Welcome 2 America tour. It's a typically maximal affair starring a hair-raising Let's Go Crazy and a wild pair of furry white boots, but there's no hint of the album that Prince had recently finished or the next one we'd hear, the Hendrixian *Plectrumelectrum*. It was another day, another Prince – one of an infinite variety.



FILE UNDER...

Lewis Taylor gets his name (briefly) in lights.

Unlucky

For its silver anniversary, an overlooked masterpiece returns on vinyl. **Jim Irvin** tells the story.

FOR THOSE who fell for it when it first appeared – can it really be 25 years ago? – the self-titled debut by Lewis Taylor was an instant classic, a mood-altering work listeners could lose themselves in and, while inside, wonder who the hell built this extraordinary place.

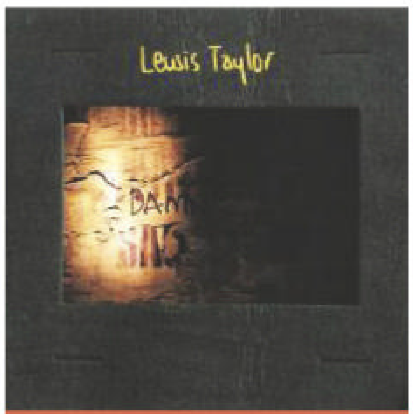
Andrew Taylor started playing piano aged four. "As a kid it was always R&B and jazz being played around me, Aretha, The Four Tops, Count Basie, Gerry Mulligan." he told me at the time. But then he stumbled into a record shop in Hertfordshire called Sounds Alright. "A geezer with long hair playing God, doling out records with all these Roger Dean sleeves. I was totally taken in by them." He became especially enamoured of the works of The Edgar Broughton Band. "By the time I was 11, I knew them all." Coincidentally, in the mid '80s, his elder brother was employed at Broughton's studio and recommended Andrew as a potential guitar player. Taylor minor joined his favourite band for a European tour. Edgar was, Taylor decided, "A bit like me, likes being miserable, doesn't talk to anybody, just does what he wants."

It was that latter quality, and that upbringing on R&B and prog, that drove *Lewis Taylor* ★★★★★ (Be With), now reissued in a beautifully remastered double vinyl edition. (A long album, contemporary single disc vinyl copies were crowded and quiet.) To write it, Taylor steeped himself in R&B history, searching as far back as Texas blues of 1919. Newly sober, he'd also begun to reappreciate favourites such as Tangerine Dream and Tim Buckley without being stoned, and he admired Scott Walker's difficult contemporary release, *Tilt*.

Some "cynical" demos got him quickly signed to Island Records, who wanted him to focus on commercial R&B, but after working on those songs for a while, Taylor decided he couldn't finish them. "Out of desperation I started to work on this bass riff that was torturing me and I found a different, more improvised way of writing… It's almost like you're the spectator watching it form." From this came the magnificent Lucky, which opens the album and sets the tone. "I want every aspect to be imaginative, the chords, the production, the arrangement. Ultimately, being creative is what concerns me." Song titles, however, were functional: Track, Song, How, Right. "I've just picked out key words, almost being industrial about it. Mahler's 5th Symphony – pretty straight title for something so dark."

The result was a dizzying feast of psychedelic soul, guitar with the flair of Eddie Hazel, voice with the swagger of Marvin Gaye, lyrics featuring flashes of sexual braggadocio and surreal (tongue in) cheek, all the more incredible for being a solo endeavour, bar the creative assistance of partner and manager Sabina Smyth, mixes by Ali Staton and Paul O'Duffy, and Cally Callomon's evocative sleeve design.

David Bowie and Elton John declared its brilliance in interviews. When D'Angelo asked out loud for the person behind this record to come and work on his music, one felt certain that Lewis Taylor was a future superstar. Instead, Island rejected his next record, which included Prince-like funk, West Coast rock and head-spinning Beach Boys-grade harmonies, and he made *Lewis II* almost in protest: "You wanted commercial pop-soul? Here it is."



"A dizzying feast of psychedelic soul."

However, Island didn't know what to do with that, either. Cut adrift, Taylor started his own label, released a clutch of brilliant records, including that rejected second set as *The Lost Album*. However, he seemed to face diminishing returns. He worked for a while as MD for Gnarls Barkley, and also appeared with Paul Weller.

But then Andrew Taylor appeared to lose heart and, in 2006, hung up his Lewis Taylor persona. For ever? Only he knows. Meanwhile, his superb debut remains a mind-blowing achievement.

Paul Rider

1984's *Let's Hear It For The Boy*, used in the movie Footloose, hit Number 2, but by 1988's clunky and severely misnamed *As Good As It Gets*, she was marooned in Hollywood central with predictable arrangements, chord changes, lyrics and, yes, sax solos.

Geoff Brown

Maggie Bell

★★★★

Suicide Sal

REPERTOIRE. CD

Glaswegian singer's second post-Stone The Crows solo LP.

Adopting the nickname of Doris Droy, a beloved aunt of Bell's who was a music hall star in Glasgow, 1975's *Suicide Sal* followed up 1974's *Queen Of The Night*, her fine Jerry Wexler-produced Southern soul album. With sessions for the gutsier *Sal* taking place at Tittenhurst Park, Ascot during Ringo Starr's tenure, Bell's Swan Song labelmate Jimmy Page playing lead on If You Don't Know and Coming On Strong, plus Pete Wingfield on keyboards, Bell's somewhat unsung second album lifts a different lid on the starry mid-'70s, her spirited, thoughtful covers of Free, The Beatles, The Sutherland Brothers and The Pretty Things beautifully realised. Repertoire's Bell re-releases also include four albums by Stone The Crows, Maggie's blues-rock band with guitarist-partner Les Harvey, who was fatally electrocuted on-stage in May 1972.

James McNair

Mickey Jupp

★★★★

Kiss Me Quick Squeeze Me Slow – The Collection

REPERTOIRE. CD+DVD

A sweet selection of Southend rock.

Mickey Jupp, the bony hand on the tiller of Southend-on-Sea's '70s music scene, is captured forever by the photo of him in his seaside bowler (that gives this collection its name) with the town's pleasure pier in the background. A blend of country, blues and R&B, Jupp's work with quartet Legend (produced by Tony Visconti and featuring eponymous future T.Rex drummer, Bill) was a key inspiration to Dr. Feelgood (for whom he wrote Down At The Doctors) and the wider pub rock scene. Vertigo and Stiff tried to make him a star, as later did A&M, but Jupp's lack of passion for anything that wasn't writing or making music thwarted his passage every time. This tidy anthology – with notes by Will Birch and including Roger Deakin's 1994 documentary on Jupp – is a fine one-stop shop of his abundant talent.

Daryl Easlea

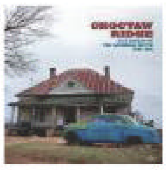
Various

★★★★

Choctaw Ridge: New Fables Of The American South 1968-1973

ACE. CD/DL/LP

Or, how Bobbie Gentry revolutionised the art of country storytelling.



As Martin Green and Bob Stanley outline in their excellent sleeve notes to this rich, rewarding compilation, the huge success of Bobbie Gentry's Ode To Billie Joe in 1967 was initially ignored by the US country scene. Like Lee Hazlewood's gothic duets with Nancy Sinatra, Gentry's eerie death narrative was as much Hollywood as Nashville, and the countrypolitan gatekeepers at first wanted nothing to do with it. But hits are hits and gradually the tale of Billie Joe McAllister and the Tallahatchie Bridge crept into the DNA of Southern songwriters. Sequencing 24 narrative songs is no easy task but Green and Stanley have worked wonders, mixing the familiar (Mike Nesmith's Joanne, Kenny Rogers' Ruby) with lesser-known wonders (Tom T. Hall's Strawberry Farms, Hoyt Axton's Way Before The Time Of Towns), songs of domestic abuse and childhood misery tied up in existential despair, and ending on exactly the correct song, Charlie Rich's soaring hymn of failure and resignation, Feel Like Going Home.

Andrew Male

Alice Coltrane

★★★★

Kirtan: Turaya Sings

IMPULSE//UME. CD/DL/LP

1982 cassette of nine devotional songs remixed by son Ravi for Impulse's 60th.

As with Nick Drake in the '90s and Arthur Russell in the noughties, the current rediscovery of Alice Coltrane feels like an act of redress and reparation, a need to engage with an artistic sensibility overlooked or undervalued in their time. As originally released through Alice's own ashram in 1982 as *Turiya Sings*, the songs here were dressed in reverb and strings. Now, stripped back to organ and voice, the similarities with Drake and Russell become unavoidable. Here is an artist seemingly operating within a sphere that feels idiosyncratic and emotionally raw. Sung in Sanskrit, but with a deep blues weight and reassuring gospel organ drone, these songs engage on an intimate, interior level. They draw on ancient tropes yet your engagement with them feels personal and unique. Coltrane's influence on everyone from Kamasi Washington to Julia Holter attests to a vastness of range but it is in miniature works like this that you truly grasp her genius.

Andrew Male

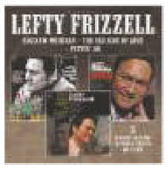
Lefty Frizzell

★★★★

Saginaw Michigan/The Sad Side Of Love/ Puttin' On

MORELLO. CD

A country giant and master of the white man's blues.



Combining his high lonesome tenor with a restrained blue wail, the late Lefty Frizzell was one of the most distinctive singers in country music and the vocal template for later-greats Merle Haggard and Randy Travis. He's at game-high on these three mid-career albums from 1964-67. Highlights include his biggest seller Saginaw Michigan, a clever cinematic tale topped with a vengeful twist. Woman, Let Me Sing You A Song is blues-rooted – like peer Hank Williams, bending a note was in his DNA. The lovelorn ballad Stranger is haunting, framed with a tic-tac bass and lush background vocalists, hallmarks of the classic Nashville sound. A-team Nashville cats accompanying Frizzell include Grady Martin and his trademark Spanish guitar and Floyd Cramer, who could almost make piano keys talk. In all, this is emotionally cathartic music that still resonates.

Michael Simmons

Leslie Winer

★★★★

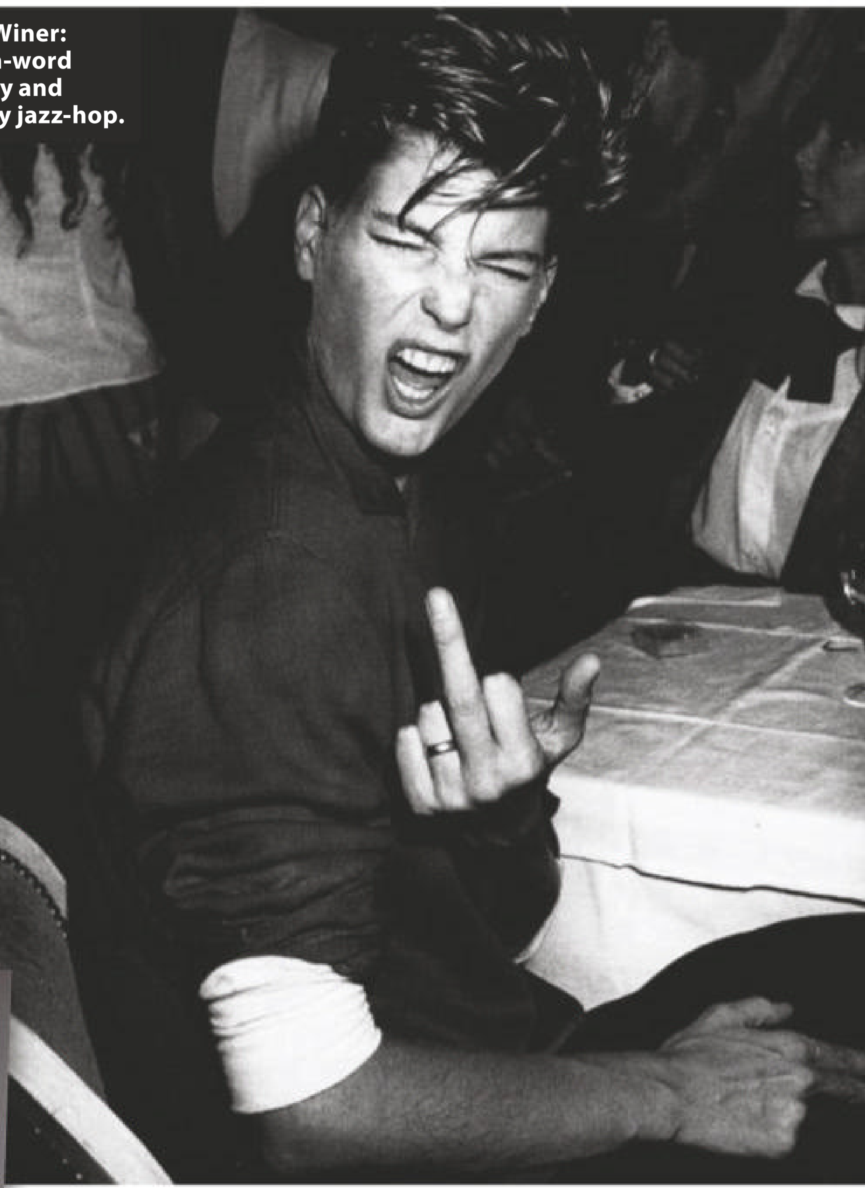
When I Hit You – You'll Feel It

LIGHT IN THE ATTIC. CD/DL/LP

Trip-hop progenitor anthologised. Featured contributors include Jon Hassell, Jah Wobble.

FROM BOSTON but based in London at the time, Winer's debut album, *Witch*, was finished by 1990 but mystifyingly delayed until 1993, by which point Massive Attack and Portishead had laid down trip-hop markers. Nor was Winer helped by the absence of a Bristol postcode, or a co-singer to soften the impact of her spoken-word potency, as Tricky did. In truth, Winer's soundscapes are more swarthy jazz-hop, The Last Poets meets Annette Peacock and Grace Jones, simultaneously sensual and tough, and rarely dependent on beat science. Only five *Witch* tracks are included here (including the searing N1 Ear, based on a Women's Liberation manifesto), plus 11 deep cuts that show Winer kept moving (only Battle Porn could really be considered trip-hop): from the Afro-futurist Tree to Personals' Sly & Robbie vibe to a swampy Dunderhead.

Martin Aston



Leslie Winer: spoken-word potency and swarthy jazz-hop.

Courtesy of Francois Dymant

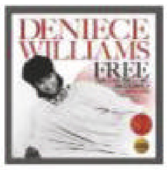
Deniece Williams

★★★★

Free: The Columbia/ Arc Recordings 1976-1988

SOULMUSIC. CD/DL

Eleven albums on seven CDs plus a CD of bonus tracks. This is Niecy indeed.



A delicate, distinctively flutey soprano, Deniece Williams paused her late-'60s recording career to start a family. Lured back to be part of Wonderlove, the first exceptional Stevie Wonder band of the '70s, her songwriting also flourished. Snapped up by Columbia, 1976 debut *This Is Niecy*, co-produced by Earth, Wind & Fire brains Maurice White and Charles Stepney, featured a US Top 25 lead single, the summery Free, fully embraced in the UK as it hit Number 1. A sugary co-write, That's What Friends Are For was re-recorded as the title track of a duet LP with Johnny Mathis. Her artistic peak came via two albums co-produced with Thom Bell, *My Melody* (1981) and *Niecy* (1982), the latter including It's Gonna Take A Miracle, a Top 10 US hit. In the UK the title track from

Behind that locked door: George Harrison listens to a playback with recording enginner Ken Scott.

Richard DiLello

I Shall Be Remixed

For its (belated) 50th birthday, George's epic vision is rendered in 4K rather than 625 lines. Superbly detailed linernotes and artefacts add value. By **Jim Irvin**.

George Harrison

★★★★★

All Things Must Pass

APPLE/UMC. CD/DL/LP

WHAT YOU probably want to know is what more can this great album offer up on its 50th. As usual, it depends how deep you want to go, into the archive and into your pocket. Imagine you have £900 to drop. Then you can salivate over the very limited Uber Deluxe Edition, which includes 8-LPs, 5-CDs and a Blu-ray housed in an "artisanal wooden crate", plus two books, a wooden bookmark fashioned from a tree in Friar Park, replica figurines of George and the gnomes from the album cover, an illustration by Klaus Voormann, a copy of Paramahansa Yogananda's Light From The Great Ones, and some Rudraksha beads in individual custom-made boxes. Something for the hedge fund manager who has everything; once it sells out in seconds and spirals out of reach in value.

More accessible is the Super Deluxe version, six discs on CD, which include Paul Hicks's brand new remixes, the complete Day 1 and 2 demo sessions, where Harrison auditioned 27 possible songs for co-producer Phil Spector (they made the right choices for the final album), a disc of jams, alternative takes and outtakes including unused solo blues, Woman Don't You Lie For Me and the Blu-ray with Atmos and 5.1 versions.

In 2001, George made the album even baggier by adding some updated bonus tracks; those are not included. That version seemed radically remastered rather than remixed. Such was the original method – recording huge groups of musicians onto 8-track, often requiring drum sub-mixes onto one track, sometimes copying onto 16-track tape before recording further overdubs, bouncing between tracks to create George's multi-layered backing vocals – there was a limit to how much control one had over the separate elements that remixers concentrate on. In 2021, with new technology to assist, Hicks has gone as far back into the master tapes as possible.

The original mix's misty distance has gone, replaced with a clarity and definition that Harrison and Spector didn't achieve (or seek) the first time around. Previously, one had to, like Spector during the playbacks, turn it up very loud to get the full effect. Not any more. These mixes come to you. The brass on the title track, for example, is now centre front rather than being some way off to the right. Wah-Wah hurtles from the speakers in a more enveloping way, kick drums doof you in the chest. You could argue this gives the album a different character, and you'd be right, rather like a different conductor brings their own colours to a symphony. As a way of future-proofing fine material for ears raised on punchier modern recordings, I don't see any harm in it, though can't, as yet, say which version I shall be returning to.

Various

★★★★

Journeys In Modern Jazz: Britain

DECCA. CD/DL/LP

Gorgeous-sounding intro to the myriad delights of '60s and '70s UK jazz.

modern
jazz:britain

British jazz experienced its first true renaissance 20 years ago, with Universal's Impressed series. Compiled by Gilles Peterson and Tony Higgins, this two-volume collection introduced the less well-travelled to a post-war new wave of '60s and '70s musicians who incorporated ideas from America, Africa and Europe alongside the progressive amplified music of the UK. In those 20 years, the artists have gone on to influence and inspire the current UK jazz scene and it's in that spirit that Higgins has brought together this powerhouse collection. Majoring on propulsive, rhythm-led tracks such as Michael Gibbs' Some Echoes, Some Shadows and Harry Beckett's Third Road, this is less dry history lesson than a joyous celebration of musicians who led the way for the likes of Shabaka Hutchings and Nubya Garcia. A series of original LP reissues is to follow, and thanks to exquisite restoring they might well sound better than the £500-plus originals.

Andrew Male

Karen Black

★★★★

Dreaming Of You 1971-1976

ANTHOLOGY RECORDINGS. CD/DL/LP

Unearthed '70s album dates from late star of Nashville and Five Easy Pieces.

Cass McCombs first discovered Karen Black in the early '90s, working part-time at a video store. A beautiful, dynamic actor, she was also possessed of a haunting singing voice, somewhere between Judy Collins's folk professionalism and the spectral eeriness of Nora Guthrie. Fifteen years later, introduced by film-maker Bob Nelson, the pair began collaborating but only recorded a few songs before Black's death in 2013. Now, with the help of Black's husband, Stephen Eckelberry, McCombs has dug through mouldering boxes of oxidising tapes to unearth two long-forgotten mid-'70s album sessions with Bones Howe and Elliot Mazer. Simultaneously enchanted and defiant, Black's songs possess an uncanny fairy tale strangeness, her voice moving effortlessly between vulnerability and defiance. Hopefully, there is more to come. Among the boxes Eckelberry discovered was one labelled "Randy Newman/Karen Black". They just need to find the tape it belongs to.

Andrew Male

LEE MORGAN
LIVE AT THE LIGHTHOUSE

Lee Morgan

★★★★

The Complete Live At The Lighthouse

BLUE NOTE. CD/DL/LP

Jazz trumpeter's only live LP expanded into a box set.

Lee Morgan was in a good place mentally, physically and musically when he played at California's legendary Lighthouse venue in July 1970. The heroin addiction that had derailed his career in the '60s seemed to be behind him and he was now leading a progressive new quintet intent on venturing far beyond the realm of hard bop. Just how far Morgan's ambitious young band were prepared to push the jazz envelope is revealed by 32 scintillating tracks that light up this epic 12-LP enlargement of the trumpeter's 1970 album, *At The Lighthouse*. It contains a spirited rendition of his 1964 hit, The Sidewinder, but more impressive are the set's newer songs; such as the haunting modal-flavoured Absolutions and the brooding Neophilia, where Benny Maupin's agile bass clarinet takes centre stage. This is a beautifully packaged celebration of one of jazz's greatest hornblowers.

Charles Waring

Various

★★★★

Good Good Feeling! More Motown Girls

ACE. CD/DL

Twenty-five more classic rarities from Gordy's soul sisters spanning 1962 to '69.

GOOD GOOD FEELING!

This fourth in the series spotlights the label's most soulful of queens, with Martha and her Vandellas and Brenda Holloway stealing the show with previously unissued tracks that sound like hit records. The former's signature energy and gusto is fully displayed on This Love I've Got, recorded in 1965 and initially intended for Ivy Jo Hunter. Holloway's 1968 title track (writer unknown), meanwhile, despite being incomplete – the recording sheet reveals strings were still to be added – shakes foundations with emotion and drama at its core. Elsewhere, Yvonne Fair testifies her way through Etta James's All I Could Do Was Cry with a vocal power unrivalled, and Gladys Knight with the Pips combines grace and urgency on 1966's Nothing But A Fool, a future Northern dancer surely.

Lois Wilson

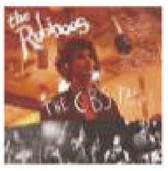
The Rubinoos

★★★

The CBS Tapes

YEP ROC. CD/DL/LP

California powerpoppers' equivalent of the Fabs' Decca audition.



When Berkeley pop-rockers The Rubinoos released their debut album in 1977, it opened with an interpretation of Tommy James And The Shondells' I Think We're Alone Now. Otherwise, it was all originals. A little earlier, they were less shy of tackling cover versions. This is the first ever release of a pep-filled session recorded on November 3, 1976 at San Francisco's CBS Studio. There are straight takes of The Beatles' I Want To Hold Your Hand and She Loves You, a groovy lunge at The Meters' Cissy Strut, an oddly Nick Lowe-ish interpretation of labelmate-to-be Jonathan Richman's Government Centre and The Ventures' Walk Don't Run. Their own I Want Her So Bad – recorded by Psychotic Pineapple – prefigures punk. Scattershot, showing that The Rubinoos hadn't settled on who they were. But *The CBS Tapes* shows they had a lot of zip.

Kieron Tyler

The Whispers

★★★★

The Definitive Collection 1972-1987

ROBINSONGS. CD/DL

Four CDs of (mostly) '70s pop-soul with smooth vocals and crisp Solar productions.

When the Scott Twins and Eden Trio vocal groups came together in Los Angeles in 1963, the quintet's new name, The Whispers, reflected their smooth soul harmonies. But lack of a truly distinctive lead voice would ensure that their '60s records enjoyed mostly only local success. The '70s were a better fit after signing to New York's Janus label and a subsequent trip to Philadelphia's Sigma Sound studios. There, producers such as Norman Harris were in tune with their vocal palette and fine tracks, such as 1974's A Mother For My Children and Bingo, followed. Moving to LA's Soul Train (1976-77) and then Solar ('77-87) brought 1978's lovely (Olivia) Lost And Turned Out, but commercially they wouldn't peak until 1980's And The Beat Goes On (guitar and strings gently lifted from Chic to give the group a US R&B Number 1; US Top 20 pop; UK Number 2), followed a year later by It's A Love Thing (US Top 30; UK Top 10). In the later '80s Solar's productions began to sound tightly formatted, but The Whispers remained their best group, those close harmonies setting them apart.

Geoff Brown

Various

★★★★

An Eclectic Selection Of Music From The Arab World, Part 2

HABIBI FUNK. CD/DL/LP

All the Egyptian organ funk, Libyan reggae and Moroccan disco you need right now.

THE GROOVERS at Habibi Funk claim to have simply created a segue of 13 tunes they enjoy, but so well does it work, it's hard to give credence to their modesty. Take Magdy El Hossainy's Music De Carnaval, an Egyptian variation on the Get Carter theme that builds into a go-go dancer's dream; Fadoul borrows the Memphis soul stew playbook on Ahl Jedba; and Munir Khauli's Heik Ha Nishtghil demonstrates what it was that Rachid Taha's Carte Sejour attempted. Any full-throttle Arabic disco, you ask? Zina, by Ouiness will have you out of your seat in an instant; no doubt there's a special dance for Zohra's Badala Zamana; and Najib Alhoush's Ya Aen Daly will have Barry Gibb's lawyers shaking their heads in frustration. Terrific stuff, but is it funky? As the proverbial mosquito's tweeter… Roll on volume 3.

David Hutcheon

The oneness of Ouiness: Arabic disco at full throttle.

'Blue' Gene Tyranny

★★★★★

Degrees Of Freedom Found

UNSEEN WORLDS. CD/DL

Six-CD box of Texas-born composer/pianist spans 1963-2019; self-compiled before his death in 2020.

He toured with Iggy And The Stooges, collaborated with John Cage, Laurie Anderson and James Tenney, and composed the rhapsodic music for Robert Ashley's Private Parts. Ashley called him "the world's greatest piano player", while Anderson likened his music to "a huge ocean liner pulling out". In his proto-punk image, adoptive name and a love for the evolutionary and spontaneous, Tyranny, AKA Robert Sheff, created a world for himself that could seem forbidding and off-putting. But his style is anything but, an expansive, unfixed world where Charles Ives is glimpsed by way of Bill Evans, or Harry Partch is filtered through Keith Jarrett. So while these pieces include everything from solo piano works to graphic scores for marimba and vibraphone, and two CDs are devoted to an epic 80-minute "audio storyboard" entitled The Driver's Seat, the overall mood is one of harmonious liberty, an expansive, peaceful and conciliatory farewell.

Andrew Male

Manzanita Y Su Conjunto

★★★★

Trujillo, Perú 1971-1974

ANALOG AFRICA. CD/DL/LP

Peak-period thrillers from Peruvian cumbia's chief guitar god.

Guitarist Berardo Hernández impacted Lima's cosmopolitan music scene in the late 1960s through releases on Dinsa, credited to Manzanita Y Su Conjunto in reference to his apple-shaped face. The subsequent military coup that banned foreign imports stimulated Peruvian cumbia's further development through increased regional influences, and by the time he signed to the larger Virrey in 1973, Manzanita was a true master of the picadito: fast ascending and descending licks that held echoes of Peru's Pacific coast. *Trujillo, Perú 1971-1974* draws largely from his Virrey output, and his virtuosity is evident in the hooks of Shambar and La Caihuita, Manzanita's stunning lead lines riding a guaracha bedrock as the organ accompaniment of Hernan Huamán helps ground the groove. Though a few tracks have reduced sonic clarity, the melancholic beauty of tracks like Salomé and Mi Pueblito are simply irresistible.

David Katz

Mose Allison

★★★★★

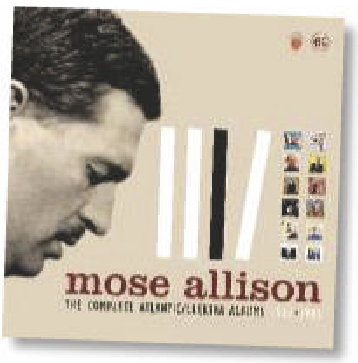
The Complete Atlantic/Elektra Albums (1962-1983)

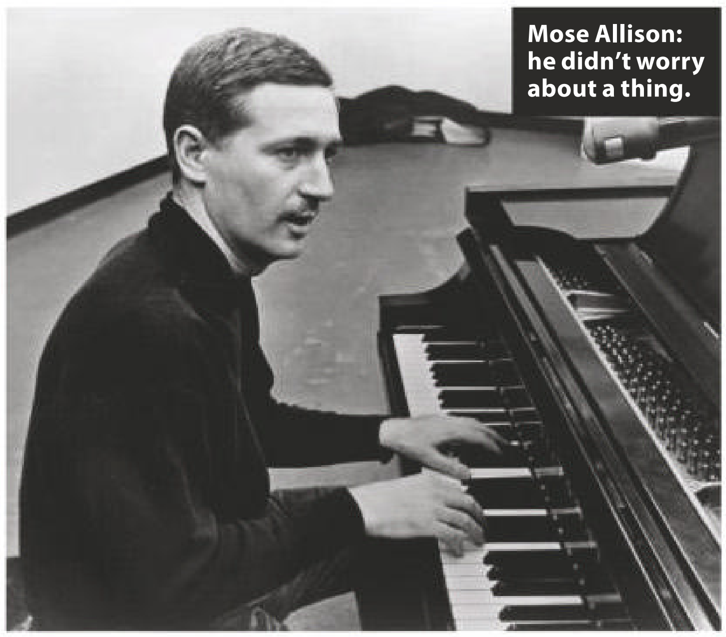
CHERRY RED. CD

A near career-spanning package of the legend of hard-blues jazz.

Mose Allison was a non-conformist even within jazz's open parameters, revered by Van Morrison, covered by The Who (Young Man Blues) and described as "the missing link between jazz and blues" by Ray Davies. Here, the six CDs collecting 12 LPs released over 21 years are catnip for hepcats from a man whose singing and piano blended the Delta swamp and bebop. His singular compositions were literate, wry ruminations on hopelessness, like I Don't Worry About A Thing ("'Cos I know nothing's gonna be alright"), stupidity (Your Mind Is On Vacation), the male libido (Wild Man On The Loose) and death (No Trouble Livin'). His keyboard facility was deft and, in keeping with his other talents, eccentric – his fingers flew flawlessly, often landing where few dared. Sidemen include David Sanborn, Jack Bruce and Billy Cobham.

Michael Simmons




Mose Allison: he didn't worry about a thing.

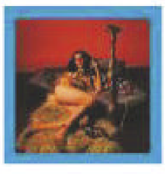
The Heads

★★★★

Relaxing With…

ROOSTER. LP

Drug-damaged, diesel-huffing debut from Bristol's psychedelic noisers.



The Heads arrived fully formed, spelling out their mission via branded promotional Rizlas, Russ Meyer stills repurposed as record sleeves and a devastating tonnage of gloriously unsubtle noise. Coming on like a lurid Roger Corman biker movie, the MC5/Stooges din of their 1995 debut album – reissued here with Peel sessions and B-sides – foregrounded the wild soloing and pedal abuse, but was lent a keen edge by frontman Simon Price's deadpan snarl. Their blend of Detroit-meets-Krautrock groove and sonic overload drew a skronky line between influences Spacemen 3 and Mudhoney and subsequent kindreds such as Comets On Fire, but there's a deliciously suave menace to The Heads' own brand of heavy. Indeed, it is impossible to argue with the caveman smarts of opener Quad, its riff primal and irresistible, while the stoned-on-the-sofa ruminations of Television offers Stoogian thrills of the highest grade.

Stevie Chick

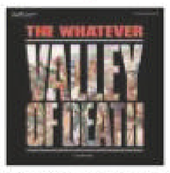
The Whatever

★★★

Valley Of Death (Or Whatever.)

BEATROCKET. CD/DL/LP

New York teens enjoy their fleeting 1967 moment.



If this band hadn't existed, the Spinal Tap team might have had to invent them for their sadly-probably-only-happening-in-our-imaginations The Mighty Wind follow-up, detailing the all too brief life cycle of a '60s garage band. So here we have the one 'sought after' single which somehow didn't make the cut for *Nuggets* – in this case an aptly galloping The Castaways-style rendering of Alfred, Lord Tennyson's paean to terrible military planning in the Crimea. Plus, a resonantly unconvincing assertion of sexual dominance (You're Mine), a handful of shaky but far from charmless honky doo wop numbers, and two sensationally inappropriate radio ad slots for local car dealer Wolfinger Dodge: "Wolfinger doesn't screw around – get yourself a mutha of a deal on a Dodge… Try one – all you have to lose is your cherry." It's generic, but transcendently so.

Ben Thompson

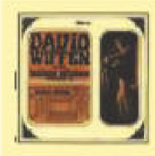
David Wiffen

★★★

At The Bunkhouse Coffeehouse, Vancouver, B.C.

MAPACHE. LP

Hard to find folk debut from Canadian singer-songwriter now at normal prices.



This Surrey-born folk singer was just 22 when he recorded his unlikely debut. After four years on the Calgary/Vancouver folk scene, David Wiffen was invited to cut four tracks for a "live" sampler to promote his home venue. But when foul weather prevented other acts from turning up, he cut an entire solo LP – effectively his live set – in three hours. Although recorded six years before his self-titled 1971 Fantasy album, that core identity – a deep, introspective baritone wrapped around tales of vagabond defeat and emotional failure – is almost fully formed. Yes, we could do without his cod Irish accent on Courtin' In The Kitchen, but on in-vogue covers (Mule Skinner Blues, Dylan's Don't Think Twice) to originals (Slice Of Life) and songs he later made his own (Buddy Johnson's Since I Fell For You), Wiffen weaves a melancholy melodic spell that holds you fast in a languorous trance.

Andrew Male

Getty

VINYL PACKAGE OF THE MONTH

Scritti Politti

Cupid & Psyche 85

ROUGH TRADE

Largely recorded in what Green Gartside calls "huge New York studios – with trouser-wateringly exorbitant hourly rates", Scritti Politti's second album completed his transformation from Marxist squat-intellectual to high-gloss hitmaker. Accompanied by reissues of 1988's *Provision* and (for the first time on vinyl) 1999's next U-turn *Anomie And Bonhomie*, *Cupid & Psyche 85* plays with pop while excelling at it, having its cake and turning it into songs as wonderful as A Little Knowledge, The Word Girl and Absolute. With the original band replaced by drummer Fred Maher, keyboardist David Gamson and a clutch of alpha session musicians, these Arif Mardin-produced tracks drip with luxury, shiny and glittering as a five-star hotel bar, albeit one with Derrida quotes lipsticked across the mirror. Gartside and Gamson's very funny sleevenotes, featuring Max Bygraves, Luther Vandross and Wittgenstein, bring extra joy. "PS," says Gartside, "The 'Absolute' is, of course, Kantian." Transcendental. Ideal.

Victoria Segal

SCRITTI POLITTI
Cupid & Psyche 85
SCRITTI POLITTI

SPACE WALK
Don Rendell Quintet

Don Rendell Quintet

★★★★

Space Walk

DECCA. CD/DL/LP

Cult British jazz album steps out again.

Reissued as part of Decca's British Jazz Explosion series, *Space Walk* originally came out in 1972 on now-defunct EMI imprint Columbia. By that time, jazz had mostly fractured into two camps – fusion and free jazz – but Plymouth-born saxophonist/flautist Rendell didn't feel an affinity with either and continued to explore Coltrane-influenced modal bop, which he'd been doing since the early '60s. Highly regarded but long-deleted, *Space Walk* captures Rendell fronting a quintet that includes fellow saxophonist Stan Robinson and Peter Shade, whose spacey, shimmering vibraphone is central to the LP's distinctive sound. As the ethereal title track and surging On The Way reveal, the band's forte was serving up hard-swinging grooves, though the pastoral ambience of Summer Song and the nocturnal shadings of The Street Called Straight highlight their versatility.

Charles Waring

BLUE STOMPIN'
Kippie Moketsi-Hal Singer

Kippie Moketsi & Hal Singer

★★★★

Blue Stompin'

WE ARE BUSY BODIES. DL/LP

Two touchstone sax-players' straight-ahead union, out of print since 1977.

Duke Ellington veteran Hal Singer was on a state-sponsored tour of South Africa when he crossed paths with mercurial alto saxophonist Kippie Moketsi. The country's Charlie Parker, one-time driving force behind The Jazz Epistles, is bursting with vitality here, the unrefined joy of his title track intro a precursor to high-spirited solo trade-offs: Singer slick and assured, Moketsi lyrical and bruised, able to generate great emotional hay from just one repeated note. Free and easy trawls through Kenny Burrell's Yes Baby and Charles Hodges' Scrap Iron repeat its moving tricks, their bright melodic conversations underscored by bassist Gus Nemeth's scale-abusing fretwork and Jabu Nkosi's unobtrusive piano shine. It's a sparkling, elemental union, the pair's weighty bop credentials never outshining the material.

Andy Cowan

SWEET STUFF
Sylvia

Sylvia

★★★★

Sweet Stuff

WE WANT SOUNDS. LP

Rare '70s LP from New York cult hero, pioneer, legend.

Recording hits since 1956's Love Is Strange (Mickey & Sylvia), Sylvia Robinson's '60s labels All Platinum, Vibration and Stang attracted a coterie of sweet soul acts in the '70s, most prominently The Moments, and disco one-offs like Shirley (And Company)'s Shame Shame Shame, written and produced by Robinson. Her own Pillow Talk (Jane Birkin meets Donna Summer) was a US R&B Number 1 in 1973. This follow-up to the *Pillow Talk* album, happily back on vinyl, starts with an oddly '60s sound, I Can't Help It recalling Freddie Scott's Hey Girl while Motown-y ballad Coward's Way Out rightly takes a very dim view of a man deserting his pregnant girlfriend. Thereafter, it's time to get a room as The Notion, Private Performance, Soul Je T'Aime, Alfredo and, with The Moments, lightly funky Sho Nuff Boogie, blow hot and whisper gentle in the ear. Next, Mrs Robinson sets up Sugar Hill Records to release Rapper's Delight, hip-hop's commercial vanguard.

Geoff Brown

COMING NEXT MONTH...

Matthew E White, Bon Iver, Diana Ross, Metallica, Public Service Broadcasting, Low (pictured), Grouper, The Stranglers, Bob Dylan, Emmylou Harris, Super Furry Animals, Shaun Ryder, Lindsey Buckingham, Manic Street Preachers and more...

Nathan Keay

REISSUES EXTRA

¡SOLTAD A BARRABAS!

Barrabás

★★★

¡Soltad a Barrabás!

GUERSSEN. LP

Guerssen issue the first three albums by the '70s Latin rock sensation led by Spain's funkiest drummer, Fernando Arbex. Their third LP was recorded in the US and aimed squarely at the disco market, with less heat and howl in its grooves. Hi-Jack was later jazzed up by Herbie Mann. *JB*

Rick Deitrick

★★★

Coyote Canyon

TOMPKINS SQUARE. DL/LP

A star of Tompkins Square's 2016 comp of private-press guitarists, the Ohio-born outsider musician developed a style "like the only guy on an island playing a guitar that's just washed ashore". These 1972 and 1975 sessions (plus one track from 1999) are both tranquil and mysterious. *AM*

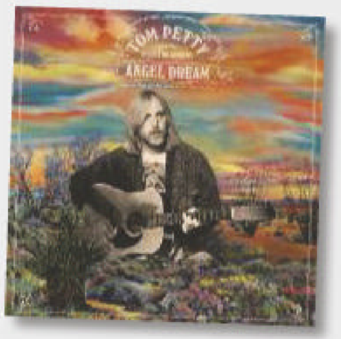
Madness

★★★★

The Rise & Fall

BMG. LP

In 1982, song of innocence lost Our House may have gone into the US Top 10, yet the Mads' fourth LP was a melancholic, strangely lysergic and Kinks-esque suite dealing with the mysteries of past and place. Nuttiness and depth, in perfect balance. *IH*



Tom Petty & The Heartbreakers

★★★★

Angel Dream

WARNER BROS. CD/DL/LP

Petty's first-rate soundtrack to 1996 Jennifer Aniston vehicle She's The One was ostensibly off-cuts from *Wildflowers*. Now 'remastered and remixed', five new additions include Dylan-aping Thirteen Days, fantastic organ jam 105 Degrees and the exquisite title track in the raw. *JB*

Nina Simone

★★★★

Little Girl Blue

BMG. CD/DL/LP

Recorded in 1957, released in '59, this profoundly mature debut (Simone was in her mid-twenties), was based on her nightclub set – I Loves You Porgy, Don't Smoke In Bed, He Needs Me, with My Baby Just Cares For Me's light relief. Vinyl is blue, sound is 'in the room'. *GB*

THIN LIZZY
GREATEST HITS

Thin Lizzy

★★★★★

Greatest Hits

UMC. LP

This is a most welcome release – a double album and the first UK Thin Lizzy hits compilation issued on vinyl since 1991's *Dedication: The Very Best Of Thin Lizzy*. Marvel again at the heart, soul and guts of Phil Lynott, manifest in quality-controlled songs from eight UK Top 20 albums. *JMcN*

Thalia Zedek
Been Here and Gone

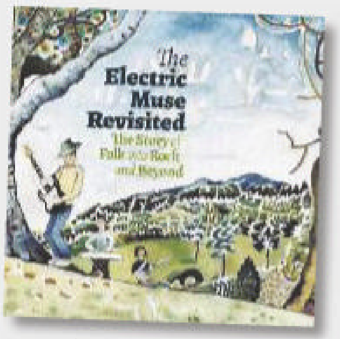
Thalia Zedek

★★★★

Been Here And Gone

THRILL JOCKEY. LP

The former Come singer/guitarist's solo debut remastered on vinyl for its 20th anniversary. A forceful inspiration to Cobain, Mould et al, Zedek's pained, romantic intensity found comfort in slow, earthy blues; her minor key riffs and sour mash voice backed by beautifully doleful viola and piano. *JB*


The Electric Muse Revisited
The Story of Folk into Rock and Beyond

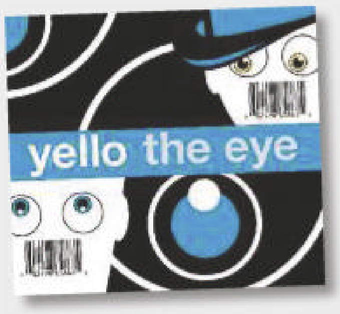
Various

★★★★

The Electric Muse Revisited

GOOD DEEDS MUSIC. CD/DL

A companion to The Story Of Folk Into Rock And Beyond book, this impressive 4-CD set goes far further than the 1975 original. Focusing on influential landmarks from Oysterband to Billy Bragg, Eliza Carthy, Imagined Village – even Stick In The Wheel and Lunatraktors. *CI*



Yello

★★★★

The Eye

UMC/POLYDOR. LP

One of five post-1991 long-players reissued on vinyl, this 2003 set finds Dieter Meier and Boris Blank doing what they do best: shimmying Latin-ly in a polymorphic sculpture garden while grand illusionist Dieter suggests you blow the lot at the casino. It's very heady stuff. *IH*

RATINGS & FORMATS

Your guide to the month's best music is now even more definitive with our handy format guide.

CD COMPACT DISC **DL** DOWNLOAD **ST** STREAMING **LP** VINYL
MC CASSETTE **DVD** DIGITAL VERSTILE DISC **C** IN CINEMAS **BR** BLU-RAY

★★★★★	★★★★	★★★	★★	★	☆
MOJO CLASSIC	EXCELLENT	GOOD	DISAPPOINTING	BEST AVOIDED	DEPLORABLE

Kevin Coyne: namechecking punks and mocking his label's boss.

Kevin Coyne

From anarchic art school bluesman to kind-eyed troubadour. By **Andrew Collins**.

NOT ENOUGH of us lie awake wondering what Tom Waits would have sounded like had he been raised not in Pomona, California, but Derby, in Derbyshire. The answer is rattlebag bluesman Kevin Coyne, whose discography runs – by his own count – to "just under 40" albums, including live recordings between 1969 and his death at 60 from lung fibrosis in 2004, having relocated to Nuremberg where he nourished his fine art in a city that also accepted him for his blues.

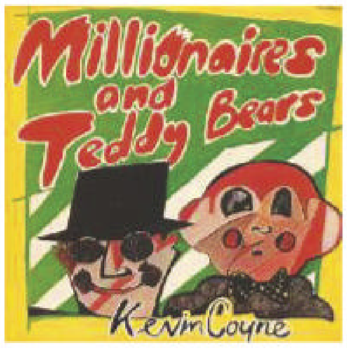
Hailed by Rolling Stone as "peculiar… even by relaxed standards", Coyne never imitated his heroes Robert Johnson and John Lee Hooker, preferring the warmly parochial improvisational cabaret that suited his German bolthole. From paint-caked fingernails to qualifications as a counsellor, he broke with blues band Siren and went solo via John Peel's Dandelion imprint. Our volubly pale-faced improviser learned free expression at art school and – an early beneficiary of Richard Branson's largesse – finessed himself into a bluff, hairy, kind-eyed troubadour. Peak Coyne came with 1978 album *Dynamite Daze*, namechecking the punks ("I'm rattlin' my bones, I'm pogo-ing!") and throatily giggling his way to irresistible if brief relevance. That he mocked Branson on the mordant Having A Party ("fools in fools' hats … discussing my future") made him daringly anarchic.

Magpies have much to divine from the CV of this "anti-star" (a description from Virgin pressnotes) who gigged constantly and welcomed a chair when the nights took their toll, post-breakdown. Growing into a rotund, white-mopped Joe Cocker figure and cool dad, he tugs on his roots and distils pure East Midlands at the end of *Dynamite Daze*, with the twangy order, "Git owt-uv-it!" After all that, he dedicated the title track to Sid Vicious.

> "He gigged constantly and welcomed a chair when the nights took their toll."

CAST YOUR VOTES...

This month you chose your Top 10 Kevin Coyne LPs. Next month we want your Diana Ross Top 10 (solo and Supremes). Send selections via Twitter, Facebook, Instagram or e-mail to mojo@bauermedia.co.uk with the subject 'How To Buy Diana Ross'; we'll print the best comments.



10 Kevin Coyne Millionaires And Teddy Bears

VIRGIN, 1979

You say: Pretty Park from *Millionaires And Teddy Bears* was the first Kevin Coyne song I heard. Love all the other albums as well. Magic songs and lyrics." Annika Kjellkvist, Facebook

"If you want another drink, there's plenty more under the sink," vouches the self-medicating, possibly out-of-sorts post-punk Coyne on Having A Party, a standout, stripped-back slow-burner based around a "nightmare boogie" at Chez Branson, reminiscent of "big teddy bears" and "the bones of pop stars". A clear, clever case of biting the hand of the boss that feeds him. I'll Go Too reveals a gorgeous acoustic pastoral idyll ("Enjoy yourself and jump on in"), but darkness intrudes by way of "little girls, see how they squeal and run," followed by millionaires "a-go-go" and "fools in fool's hats." Cab for Mr Coyne!

Kevin Coyne

4 Kevin Coyne Marjory Razorblade

VIRGIN, 1973

You say: "Marlene, House On The Hill, Eastbourne Ladies and Talking To No One all got me into his music," Al Cane, Facebook

This mega-confident 22-track, Manor-born double coins a boldly narrative new Coyne. He opens the set judiciously a cappella, closer to beat poetry than rock, that singular blues voice precisely as the Derbyshire twang intended. He holds room and nerve with a description of neighbour Marjory, whom he humorously warbles will "sort out all of my nasty neighbours". Band arrangements are augmented by tuba, congas and mandolin, while Coyne mixes daft live favourite Chicken Wing with flamenco-flavoured Dog Latin, in which his master's voice speaks in canine tongues. Are those memories of a Catholic childhood peering through the silliness?

Getty, Alamy

Kevin Coyne
Nobody dies in dreamland
HOME RECORDINGS FROM 1972

9 Kevin Coyne
Nobody Dies In Dreamland

CHERRY RED, 2012

You say: "The unreleased Coyne offers a rock'n'roll road to ruin." C McEllin, mojo4music.com

Subtitled *Home Recordings From 1972*, this personal journey is reflected in its sweet cover artwork, featuring a family snapshot of Coyne and his young sons Robert and Eugene (both of whom took up instruments with Dad and keep the flame alive today). The Coyne who recorded *Nobody Dies In Dreamland* is not yet 30, but he's peeling back the years, sounding twice his age. Now That I Am Getting Old has a touch of the Alabama porch, with "strange tunes" in his head. Enjoy the white harmonica blues Baby Man as he turns in for the night: "I think I'll change the sheets and all… Maybe I'll do some drawing, do some sketching, too."

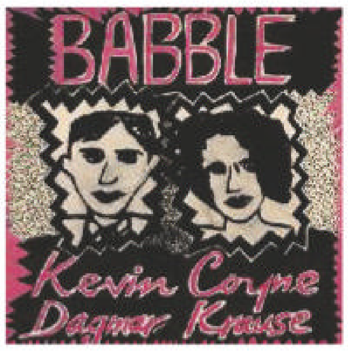
kevin coyne sugar candy taxi

8 Kevin Coyne
Sugar Candy Taxi

RUF, 1999

You say: "I'd say, *Sugar Candy Taxi, The Adventures Of Crazy Frank* (1995) and *Case History*." Ian Trotter, Facebook

A road-trip kitchen-sink fantasy opens with sustained chainsaw squeal on a bendy title track that vouches that Al Capone's cigar "really smells". In My Wife's Best Friend, Coyne salaciously confesses, "She really turns me on … I hope she stays away tonight," then knocks the husband "to the floor". Kevin Coyne's kick up the ebbing millennium, *Sugar Candy Tax* asks lively questions: is Coyne the self-mocking Happy Fat Man? Did he intend to sound as if he were singing through a large mouthful of cake? Porcupine People pins his constant paranoia ("Maybe I'm paranoid, maybe I'm paranoid"), and a recorder is manhandled, complementing the childlike sleeve illustrations.



7 Kevin Coyne & Dagmar Krause
Babble

VIRGIN, 1979

You say: "*Marjory* and *Case History* are entry-level Kevin. But for me it's *Babble* and *Bursting Bubbles*." Andrew Cooke, Facebook

An Anglo-Deutsche musical collaboration between an up-for-it Coyne and Hamburg's Dagmar Krause bore strange fruit with this Weimar-esque theatrical happening, later unveiled as a distasteful rock opera about the Moors murderers ("I'm dead, I'm dying"). Coyne's Virgin-encouraged merger with Henry Cow mainstay Krause seemed to bully his steel guitar with squeaky, sarcastic falsetto. The Hindley/Brady angle drained *Babble* of an audience, but poetic notes like "snow on the East Lancs Road" and a "son-in-law in the back room, toying with a gun", beg further assessment. Trivia: a besotted Will Oldham later toured *Babble* with a six-piece live band.

KEVIN
Pointing the Finger
POLITICZ

6 Kevin Coyne
Pointing The Finger/Pøliticz

CHERRY RED, 1981/1982

You say: "I saw Kevin live many times, even invited me and my mates to see them in Rotterdam. Special mention to Brian Godding – fantastic guitarist." Rob Venables, Facebook

Conjoined as *The Cherry Red Albums 1981-1982*, Coyne's prolific game was upped at a welcoming new label, despite what we now refer to as mental health issues. Over 19 tracks, prepare for plenty of Steve Bull's synth and fretless bass, as our wobbly, heartbroken minstrel rocks out Paul Rodgers-style on robust opener There She Goes ("I love the sound of your lovely name"). The pastoral folk of Song Of The Womb and general music-hall fun give way to a seemingly sincere Casio synthpop suite ("Robin Hood is really good") that peaks with the mordantly Kraftwerkian Poisoning You ("I do it all the time").

Kevin Coyne
Blame it on the Night

5 Kevin Coyne
Blame It On The Night

VIRGIN, 1974

You say: "*Blame It On The Night* without a doubt. He took the raw blues and warped humour of *Marjory Razor Blade* and refined it." Keith Bell, Twitter

Rocking like a trooper and still laughing like a maniac, storm clouds gather on the sleeve of this oft-wounded-sounding set of four-to-the-floor workouts and acoustic doodles. It mixes the exploratory honky tonk sax of the late Ruan O'Lochlainn (Ronnie Lane's Slim Chance) into Coyne's guffawing vocal style and a band built around South Shields bluesman Gordon Smith and drummer Chili Charles. A 2010 edition offers a radio sessions bonanza: Fat Girl, rare nugget Mrs Hooley Go Home (from Andy Summers-accompanied *Matching Head And Feet* LP) and two epic 10-minute jams winkled from Whispering Bob's archive.

KEVIN COYNE
ONE DAY IN CHICAGO

3 Kevin Coyne, Jon Langford & The Pine Valley Cosmonauts
One Day In Chicago

BURIED TREASURE, 2005

You say: "So many greats to choose from! But … *Chicago* is a classic," Andrew Fordyce, Twitter

This low-riding improvised 2002 blues session unites Coyne with Chicago-relocated, Monmouth-raised expat and producer Jon Langford (Mekons; Three Johns) for a whimsical curtain call in which Coyne observes, "The sea looks inviting to me," after the titular Fat Girl also considers suicide. Autobiography is straightforward when he croons of the clip-clopping Britischer Cowboy "singing a typically British song". Think of Coyne as a singing Düsseldorf brickie in Auf Wiedersehen, Pet and his unplanned valedictory takes on comfort and joy. In the studio, he signs off: "OK, that's me today. Brain gone."

KEVIN COYNE CASE HISTORY

2 Kevin Coyne
Case History

DANDELION, 1972

You say: "*Case History* – and *Babble* – in all their diversity, show Kevin's most idiosyncratic and deep unique take on life and music," Albert Needleman, Facebook

Coyne chuckled in the face of mortality, latterly taking to his website to reassure fans "who might think I'm fading away into feeble old age." He gigged on and painted with glee, the passage of time re-framing *Case History* as an increasingly crucial cog in Coyne's slow-moving revolution, borne of his experience at Whittingham Hospital (counsellor rather than patient). Its woozily melodic, seated storytelling was initially backed by the members of blues-rock quartet Siren, whereby he found his one-man brand. This solo debut peaks with a magical White Horse ("riding across my mind") and the rasper Sand All Yellow, suggestive of Tom Waits.

KEVIN COYNE
DYNAMITE DAZE

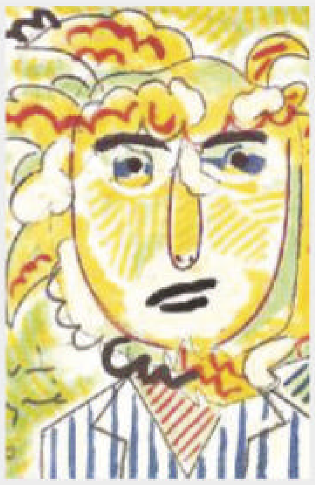
1 Kevin Coyne
Dynamite Daze

VIRGIN, 1978

You say: "I am enjoying listening to *Dynamite Daze* at the moment," says Richard Mertin on Facebook. Stephen Cassidy agrees: "One of my faves." "This stomper is definitive rockin' Kev and gives Derby a good name," Phil Dench, via e-mail

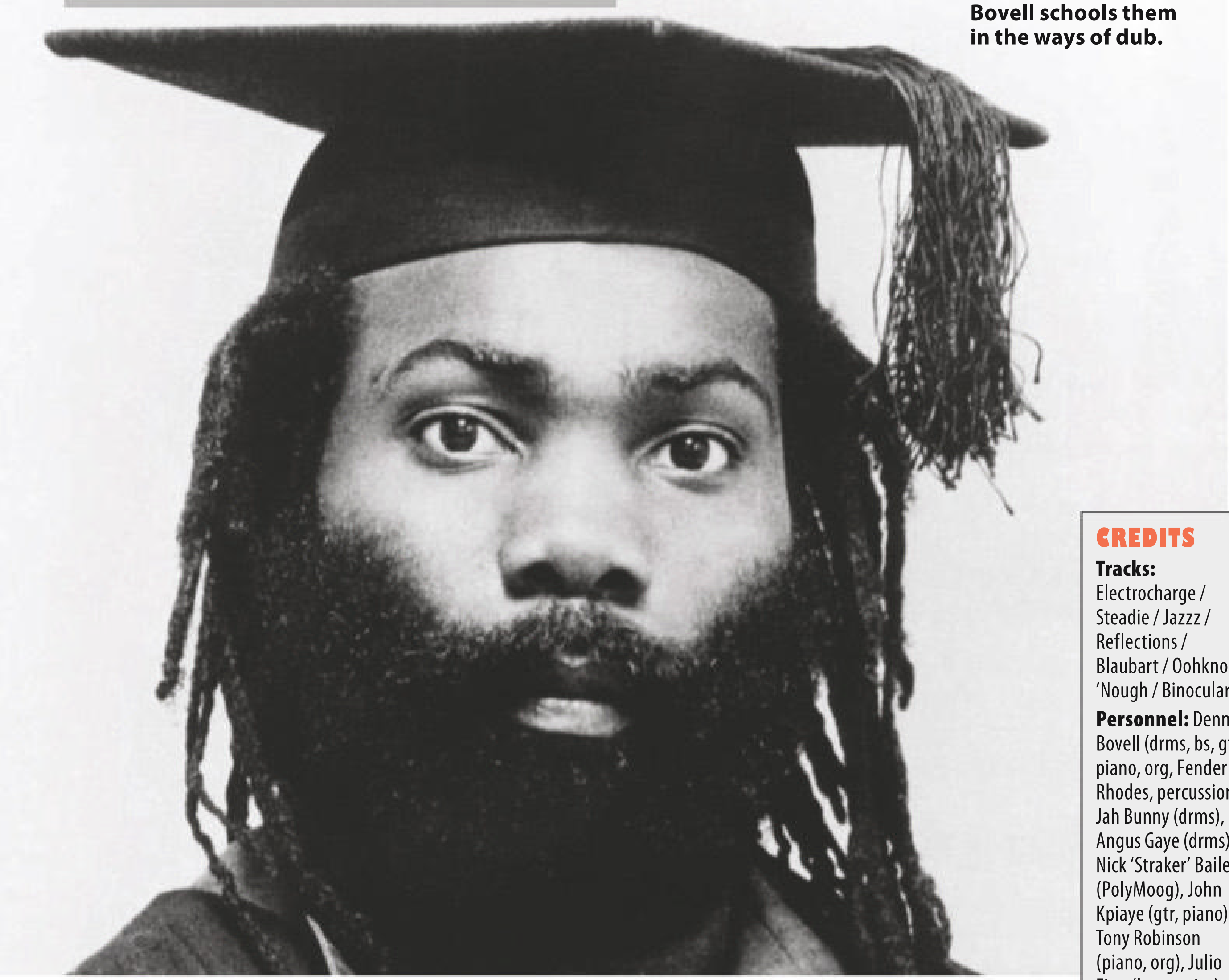
Whump! The definitive entry for Coyne collectors remains this fizzing new wave stomper with two total bangers to kick-off sides one and two. We're transported to Amsterdam's Melkweg ("I'm rattling my bones, I'm pogo-ing"), where a hairy, gurgling early-thirties East Midlander crows, "Revolution? Seen it all, seen it all before!" The album hiccups, free-forms and rises to a yodelling falsetto. He chuckles like side one's Lunatic ("luna-luna-luna-luna-luna-luna-luna-tic") with abandon. His voice is a unique instrument, unhampered by self-consciousness or authenticity, which is not earned, it is innate. He should be as cherished as Barrett, Stanshall, Moon, Brown, Davies, Harper, Lydon, Sensible, Albarn and Haines. In a parallel world, he is.

NOW DIG THIS



Paintings

Kevin Coyne was an unstoppable fine artist who exhibited far and wide. He graduated from Derby Art School (these days University) in 1965 and continued to paint and draw to his dying day. Coyne designed the majority of his almost 40 LP sleeves. Childlike in the empowering sense of the word, he was essentially a bawdy cartoonist in paint who clearly loved Marc Chagall. Very much in the primitivist or Edenic style, which ennobles the untrained and favours the untaught, he exhibited in the UK, Netherlands, Switzerland and across his adopted Germany. After giving up drinking, he went on to find a market for his colourful, psychedelic daubs, all for sale on his website.



From mortar board to mixing board: Dennis 'Blackbeard' Bovell schools them in the ways of dub.

Getty

Blues dance heaven

Found in music's catacomb of mystery: a Brit-bass concept album of a reggae night on the tiles.

Blackbeard

I Wah Dub

MORE CUT, 1980

ONE OCTOBER night in 1974, police raided the Carib Club on Cricklewood Broadway, where Dennis Bovell was playing with his Sufferer's HiFi soundsystem. Tempers flared, a scuffle ensued – nothing to do with Bovell – but the next day he was charged with causing an affray. He ended up spending six months of a three-year sentence in Wormwood Scrubs before his conviction was overturned.

The event inspired the blazing stand-off between selector and police in Franco Rosso's 1980 film Babylon, which Bovell soundtracked. "But where that was a fictionalised account, mine was a true horror," he says. "Even though I was innocent I stopped the soundsystem soon after. I didn't want any trouble, and I got serious about being a writer, musician and producer instead."

Born in Saint Peter, Barbados in 1953, but living in London from the age of 12, by 1974 the multi-instrumentalist had already had three years of "seriousness" with funk-reggae outfit Matumbi, and by the end of the decade he'd helped build a homegrown British scene as fecund as Jamaica's.

"It was important to disprove the theory that only Jamaican reggae was the real deal, that British reggae was somehow inauthentic and couldn't cut it," he says. By the end of the '70s, his achievements included pioneering lovers rock, foregrounding female vocalists in a traditionally male domain; bringing musical militancy to the polemical dub poetry of Linton Kwesi Johnson; bridging punk and reggae by producing The Pop Group and The Slits, and innovative solo works as The 4th Street Orchestra and Blackbeard.

"I was doing so much I didn't want to be in competition with myself, so I took on different personas," says Bovell. "Blackbeard was the dub master, the sound system operator working out of his studio." 1978's throbbing *Strictly Dub Wize* was his first of two heavyweight albums issued under the pseudonym: "The aim was to get on the groove of *Ah Who Seh? Go Deh!* [1976 recording as The 4th Street Orchestra] which had been sold on the pretext of being an import from Jamaica. It came out in a plain sleeve, no details."

1980's follow-up *I Wah Dub*, he says, was more "London, and intentionally so. I'd discovered how King Tubby had been shifting the frequencies to create that monster sound he had, and I found my own way of delivering a similar thing but with a bit more finesse."

At just under 30 minutes, the album's eight tracks were all conceived as 'specials', originally cut as one-off acetates to play out. They were sequenced to capture the reverie of the blues dance experience, as immortalised in Steve McQueen's 2020 BBC film Lovers Rock, which featured a cameo from Bovell.

"Blues dances had been a big part of my life since moving to the UK," he explains. "My father, who worked for London Transport, was an ardent record collector, he bought Caribbean, African and American records from a catalogue, my mother was a nurse, so the house was a party place filled with their work colleagues."

I Wah Dub is heady stuff, from the steppers opener Electrocharge, built around an outtake of the drum track from Janet Kay's 1979 smash Silly Games, to closer Binoculars, the mesmeric dub of a Matumbi flip-side inspired by Jimi Hendrix. Says Bovell, who started out in a Hendrix-inspired school band, Stonehenge: "I used [Jimi's] tactic of running the plectrum down the fretboard so it sounds like a vehicle. Then, instead of playing on the strings, I was playing the bit where the strings are anchored above the fretboard. Just messing about really."

In between, Steadie, Jazzz and Reflections are in-the-moment, escapist lovers rock, a safe space where ideas float free of outside oppression; Blaubart is an uprising surge of rebel energy, while penultimate cut 'Nough is the coming together moment where the imaginary dancefloor is united. It finds Bovell dismantling, then rebuilding, the Errol Dunkley A Living Way Different riddim he'd put together in '77, "with the Eventide harmoniser which could shift pitch. I recorded Patrick [Tenyue, who played melodica on Blaubart] beefing, flipping his voice from high to low." It sounds like he's holding communion with aliens.

Released on Bovell's own More Cut label, it came in a cosmic Anthony Lovindeer sleeve which cast Bovell as intergalactic dub maestro beaming messages from outer space to Africa. A bass aficionado's choice, *I Wah Dub* would become a landmark in British reggae.

Afterwards, Bovell carried on producing and playing, working with artists including Lee Perry, Fela Kuti, Ryuichi Sakamoto, Orange Juice, Madness and many others.

Currently working on tracks for Jarvis Cocker and Austin indie band Spoon, plus a mystery project with Bobby Gillespie, Bovell sees *I Wah Dub* as a career high.

"It's one of my finest pieces of work," he says, adding, "There is hoo-ha over who owns it. I've had no royalties on it for the past 20 years. My lawyer is currently looking into it. They wouldn't do it to Elton John, Mick Jagger or Paul McCartney would they? The high court has to decide."

Lois Wilson

CREDITS

Tracks: Electrocharge / Steadie / Jazzz / Reflections / Blaubart / Oohkno / 'Nough / Binoculars

Personnel: Dennis Bovell (drms, bs, gtr, piano, org, Fender Rhodes, percussion), Jah Bunny (drms), Angus Gaye (drms), Nick 'Straker' Bailey (PolyMoog), John Kpiaye (gtr, piano), Tony Robinson (piano, org), Julio Finn (harmonica), Patrick Tenyue (melodica, vocals)

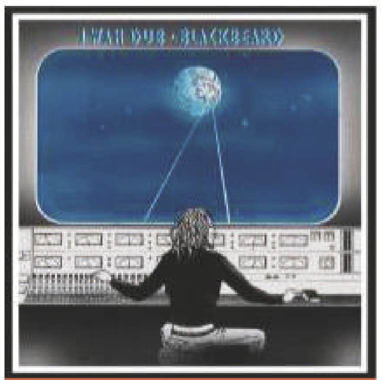
Producer: Dennis Bovell

Released: March 1980

Recorded: Gooseberry Studios, London

Chart peak: 3 (Dub Vendor's UK reggae chart)

Current availability: Regal Zonophone CD



> **"It was important to disprove... that British reggae was somehow inauthentic."**
> **DENNIS BOVELL**

Sibling revelry: Ron (left) and Russell Mael (insets, from left) with director Edgar Wright; Jason Schwartzman.

Anna Webber, Getty

Brother beyond

How many talking heads does it take to unveil the Brothers Mael? asks **Andrew Male.**

The Sparks Brothers

★★★

Dir: Edgar Wright

COMPLETE FICTION/MRC. C

THE CAST OF characters Edgar Wright has assembled to speak for the genius of Ron and Russell Mael in this two-hour-plus career documentary is impressive: Beck, Mike Myers, Giorgio Moroder, Todd Rundgren, Jane Wiedlin, Flea, Jason Schwartzman, Amy Sherman-Palladino, Patton Oswalt… the list goes on. It's worth mentioning because these talking heads, who are largely here to hymn the band's brilliance, rather than (as in Moroder's case) talk about working with them, take up a significant portion of the film. Gradually, you come to understand why.

Firstly, Wright is a Sparks fan, and this is very much a fan-boy film. We're here to hear from the great and the good about how and why they love these two men so much. Suffice to say, if you are also a dedicated Sparks fan, you will be in heaven. You get the full biography, plus a complete breakdown of each of the 25 studio albums, something that hardly ever happens in music career retrospectives.

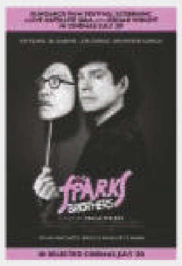
Which leads us to the second reason why The Sparks Brothers is a film concerned as much about the voices of others with as the voices of Ron and Russell. If the surface image of Sparks is one of eccentricity and other-worldly oddness "with Adolf Hitler on the keyboards", as Steve Jones puts it, then the root truth is that here is a band who have kept going for 50 years, operating at an impressive level of genius, because music and routine is their life, and that makes for very few interesting tales out of school, and pretty soon the story becomes album, tour, album, tour etc.

Wright is blessed with the fact that every Sparks performance and video from the 1970s looks incredible, and there is a wonderful photo archive available, but he spends a long time working certain ideas into the ground: fans who thought they were English; a repeated gag in which the band invent numerous "interesting" facts about themselves.

Good insights are made, such as the significance played by the early death of their father, a mother who took them to see The Beatles twice, the influence of Hollywood cinema, its narratives, jingles, cartoons and big-screen brashness, but the further the documentary goes on, the more you feel that, as Jason Schwartzman points out, the group's mystique is in danger of fading away. By the time you get to the 90-minute mark this brilliant, inventive, and constantly innovative group start to seem almost workmanlike.

Yet, towards the end, the purpose of Wright's approach slowly becomes apparent. Faced with a band who only seem comfortable talking habit, routine, work, exercise and repetition, the subtext is left to the guests. When Alex Kapranos, Wiedlin and Beck discuss Ron's lyrics, these "fucked up songs of loneliness" that he gives his handsome brother to sing, you realise that here is the essence and genius of Sparks. The Maels' silence on matters personal only adds to the power of their work. Ron and Russell will tell you where they have breakfast every day, while Edgar Wright will present you with various fan theories, stories, and an album-by-album chronology. The job of adding meaning and worth to all that is up to you, the viewer.

"The Maels' silence on matters personal only adds to their power."



WHAT WE'VE LEARNT

- At various points in their career Sparks were involved in failed film projects with the film-makers Tim Burton and Jacques Tati.
- Ron has a huge snow globe collection.
- Jane Wiedlin of the Go-Go's briefly dated Russell Mael and clearly still holds a candle for him.

Time for reflection: Jimi Hendrix relaxes backstage, Saville Theatre, London, June 1967.

Alamy

Power to love

The bawdy, tragic tale of a guitar hero and the many women in his life. By **Mark Blake**.

Wild Thing: The Short, Spellbinding Life Of Jimi Hendrix

★★★★

Philip Norman

WEIDENFELD & NICOLSON. £9.19

AS PHILIP Norman explains in this paperback edition of 2020's Wild Thing, "Hendrix is an icon in the exact sense of that over-used word. The youngest rock fan of any nation is likely to sport a T-shirt imprinted with his face… like some mass-produced Turin Shroud."

This is one of his reasons for tackling a subject explored in many other books since Jimi Hendrix's death in September 1970. That, and a serendipitous closeness to the subject. In 1969, Sunday Times writer Norman turned down a Hendrix interview as he was pre-booked to meet a young Michael Jackson instead.

Then, in 2018, he realised the 50th anniversary of Hendrix's death was imminent, received an unexpected e-mail from one of Jimi's old friends, and discovered that his milkman had once decorated Hendrix's Marble Arch flat. By the end of the prologue, fate has dictated Norman should write a Hendrix book.

Norman brings a broadsheet journalist's rigour to the job. He doesn't linger on the music, but fully explores Hendrix's impact on other guitarists. In one priceless scene, Eric Clapton and Pete Townshend are spotted at a Hendrix gig, "holding hands like awestruck toddlers at a firework display."

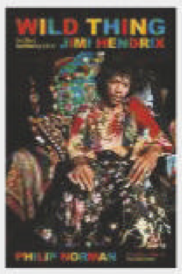
But Wild Thing has a sub-plot missing from previous biographies, notably Charles R Cross's Room Full Of Mirrors and Charles Shaar Murray's Crosstown Traffic. This is as much the story of Hendrix's women, and the huge bearing they had on his life. Hendrix felt abandoned by his birth mother, Lucille (though his dad, Al, wasn't much better), and there's an air of surrogacy about many of the women he meets thereafter. "You remind me of my mother," he sometimes tells them, as a precursor to sex.

These women include former girlfriends Kathy Etchingham and Monika Dannemann, who were still at odds years after his death. But also, Norman's most revealing interviewees: Linda Keith, the 20-year-old ex-Camden School girl who discovered Hendrix in New York and tipped off his future manager Chas Chandler, and Patricia 'Trixi' Sullivan, former PA to his co-manager Mike Jeffery. Trixi is in the role of exasperated den mother; regularly booking The Jimi Hendrix Experience to see a Harley Street doctor, as "the three of them were riddled with the clap."

Wild Thing's finale offers a detailed examination of Hendrix's last three days and the conflicting accounts surrounding his death. Norman interviews Penny Ravenhill, who with two friends, including a Lloyds underwriter named Philip Harvey, spent the afternoon with Hendrix before he died. After Harvey's MP father was elevated to the House Of Lords, his cautious son swore Ravenhill and her friend to secrecy about their Hendrix encounter, until now.

Some claim Hendrix committed suicide; others that he was murdered by the Mafia (revenge for one of Mike Jeffery's misdeeds). Norman thinks it was a tragic accident. Jimi's friend, former Animal, Eric Burdon, was among the first on the scene, but turned down his request for an interview, "as I'm working on my own Jimi Hendrix story," he says ominously. Wild Thing is as spellbinding as its title suggests, but won't be the last word. The eternal mystery surrounding rock's Turin Shroud continues.

> **"You remind me of my mother."**
> JIMI HENDRIX'S OCCASIONAL PREAMBLE TO SEX



WHAT WE'VE LEARNT

- In 1960, the teenage Hendrix landed a job playing guitar for soul giant Ray Charles. "Even our dad was impressed by that," says Hendrix's brother, Leon.
- Hendrix claimed to have left the 101st Airborne Division with an honourable discharge after injuring his ankle. Norman says he finagled his way out on "spurious medical and psychiatric grounds", including feigning dizziness, bad eyesight and homosexuality.
- Young blues aficionado and Keith Richards' girlfriend Linda Keith persuaded Hendrix to embrace his natural Afro by showing him the cover of Dylan's *Blonde On Blonde*.
- In 1979, a Californian student newspaper requested the CIA's file on Hendrix under the Freedom Of Information Act. They discovered that due to his influence on white youth, Hendrix would have been interred in a detainment camp during a national emergency.

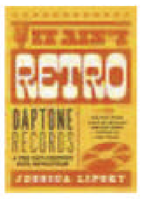
It Ain't Retro: Daptone Records & The 21st Century Soul Revolution

★★★★

Jessica Lipsky

JAWBONE. £14.95

From the basement to topping the charts: the story of the New York soul label.



The author's strength here is twofold: first, her neat ability to explain Daptone's place in soul's long and winding history, arguing how a retro revival was "born of necessity"; second, her insightful interviews with all the key players, in particular label founders Gabe Roth and Neal Sugarman plus Dap-Kings' guitarist Binky Griptite (who fell asleep during his company audition while playing along to a JB rhythm). Central to the label's success, of course, is Amy Winehouse, who used the house band on her *Back To Black* album, but it's the late Sharon Jones who *made* the label, both with her hard-hitting vocals and spunky attitude. First hired to sing backing with two of her friends on a Lee Fields session, she turned up alone. "'Why pay three when you could pay me?' and she links up all three parts of the harmonies," Roth recalls.

Lois Wilson

The Electric Muse Revisited: The Story Of Folk Into Rock And Beyond

★★★

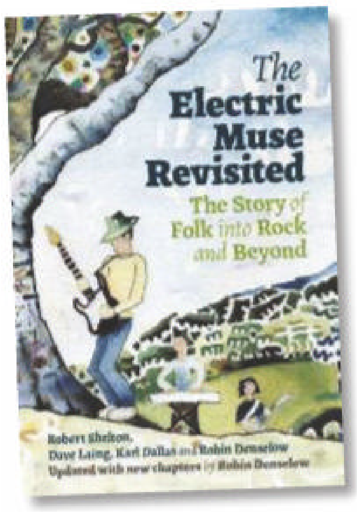
Robert Shelton, Dave Laing, Karl Dallas And Robin Denselow

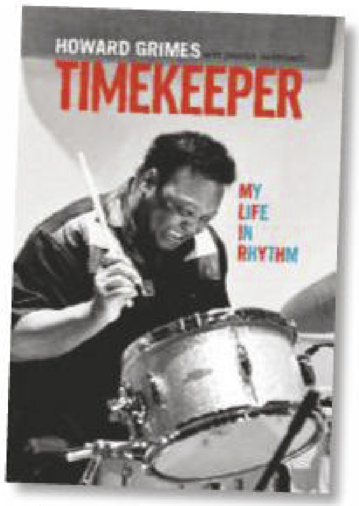
OMNIBUS. £18.99

Updated tale of an ongoing (r)evolution.

Folk rock was still considered refreshing – maybe still even a tad controversial in some circles – when this was first published in 1975, though in truth the full-throttle thrills and spills of Fairport Convention, Steeleye Span and Albion Band had already lost momentum and were about to be swamped by punk rock. Robin Denselow – the only original author still standing – is tasked with telling us what happened next, giving a solid overview of those who subsequently grabbed the baton and sped off into different corners of the field with it. Bellowhead, Stick In The Wheel, Sam Lee, Jim Moray, Offa Rex, Eliza Carthy, Imagined Village and Edward II are all heralded, Denselow establishing a credible lineage from the pioneers previously lauded. The divergent and often verbose narrative styles of the 1975 writers make that version somewhat laborious, but Shelton's American chapters are enjoyably illuminating, and their collective insights are a valuable rebuttal of the revisionists who've surfaced in recent years to rewrite history.

Colin Irwin





Timekeeper: My Life In Rhythm

★★★

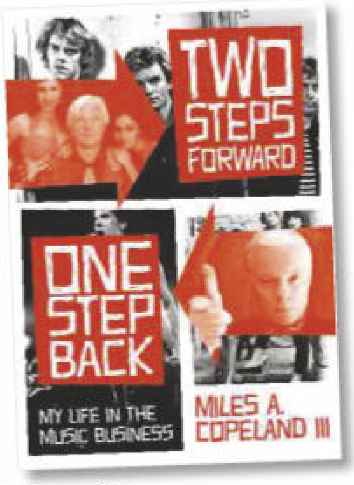
Howard Grimes With Preston Lauterbach

DEVAULT GRAVES. £18.04

From hitmaker to homeless in 150 pages, a great drummer's life so far.

Springing from the same Memphis schools as Isaac Hayes and Booker T. Jones, Howard Grimes drummed on Stax's very first hits – Carla Thomas's Cause I Love You and Gee Whizz, William Bell's You Don't Miss Your Water. But it was the distinctive sound developed with Willie Mitchell on the Hi label's hits (Al Green; Ann Peebles; O.V. Wright, his favourite singer) that set Grimes apart – a big, thick, carefully tuned stew of deep snare and churning bass drum. Born in 1941 to a very young mother, Grimes worked in black churches and white clubs, a reliable stage drummer who became, as Mitchell dubbed him, a "bulldog" in the studio. But after years of Hi times, the label was sold, and Grimes seemed ostracised by former Hi bandmates Teenie Hodges and his brothers. He had what sounds like a breakdown – depressed, homeless, briefly jailed, but found God, and former Hi colleagues eventually rallied round as he found a way back to music and salvation. "I appreciated what a great artist [Willie Mitchell] was," says Grimes, "after he stopped fucking me over on business."

Geoff Brown



Two Steps Forward, One Step Back: My Life In The Music Business

★★★

Miles A. Copeland III

JAWBONE. £14.95

Former Police and Sting manager tells his tale. Well, some of it…

CIA officer's son Miles Copeland III's childhood dinner guests included Kim Philby and Egypt's President Nasser. As an adult, he started R.E.M., Go-Go's and Fine Young Cannibals' label IRS and managed Wishbone Ash, The Police and, for a tumultuous month, Duran Duran. His motto is "people are shit", so few are spared amid his deliciously waspish saga in which "the lights went out when Tracy Chapman entered the room"; while Jake Riviera, his successor as Squeeze manager, is "someone who went out of his way to be a prick". He's selective, shrugging "the less I knew the better" of Sting and Trudie Styler's affair, while the Police split is glossed over ("Sting, who had now gone solo…") as is his sacking by Sting. Instead, he rattles though some of his life story via a bunch of gleefully entertaining tales. These days? He's managing belly dancers.

John Aizlewood

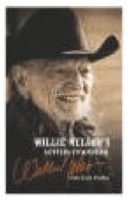
Willie Nelson's Letters To America

★★★

Willie Nelson With Turk Pipkin

HARPER HORIZON. £20

"Your old friend Willie" keeps the art of letter writing alive.



What kind of person writes a heartfelt letter to his guitar? The Willie Nelson kind, of course. "How much did I love you? When I ran into that burning house to rescue you, people said it was the dumbest thing I ever did, but I knew it was the smartest," he elucidates to Trigger, the Martin N-20 that's served as his constant companion for more than 50 years. Trigger is one of dozens of loved ones receiving nostalgic, confessional and often emotional missives from the 88-year-old country cornerstone, alongside family members, friends and objects, animate and not (both whiskey and cannabis get shout-outs; so too does Covid-19). Many of the letters, ranging in tone from tear-jerking to hilarious, are accompanied by a Nelson song lyric, kickstarting the author's next note. Not all of the chosen songs are Nelson-composed: America The Beautiful and Georgia On My Mind, usher in tributes to his 4th of July picnics and former President Jimmy Carter. Throughout, the sincerity is as undeniable as it is every time Willie Nelson opens his mouth to sing.

Jeff Tamarkin

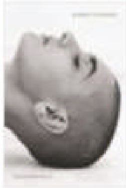
Rememberings

★★★★

Sinéad O'Connor

SANDYCOVE. £20

Wonderful despite her "I ain't gonna be winning the Booker…" disclaimer.

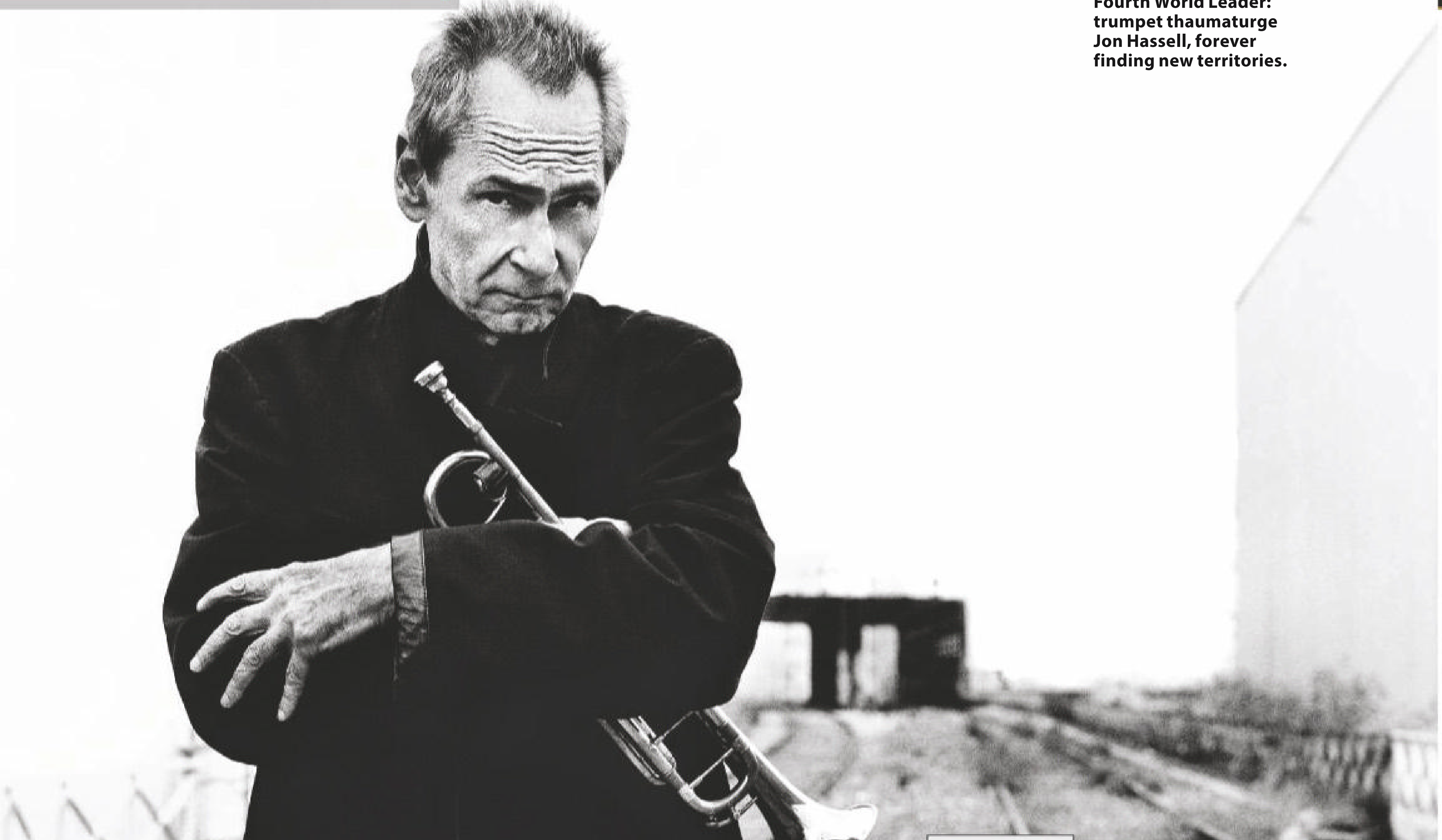


We expect candour from O'Connor, and as she unpeels "a vulnerable girl", not "the tough Bambi in bovver boots everybody thought", her account of sickening physical and emotional abuse from the mother she lost in a car crash aged 18 makes deeply affecting reading. A darkly troubling encounter with Prince also shows great comic flare, though, O'Connor comparing him to Father Ted's Mrs Doyle as "Ol Fluffy Cuffs" tries to foist soup upon her. Worldly wise by 13, infatuated with Dylan, Muhammad Ali and Barbra Streisand, the impulsive, vehement, big-hearted and uncompromising Sinéad experiences miracles (we hear of daughter Roisin's guardian angel), and suffers from kleptomania, "mild anorexia", agoraphobia and debilitating mental illness. Crucially, she cites her infamous tearing-up her mother's photo of Pope John Paul II on live TV in 1992 as "the moment that put me back on track", since "it represented liars and abuse". Crammed with revelation, darkness and light, Rememberings is extraordinary.

James McNair

Electric Muses: Fairport Convention, guiding folk into rock.

Getty



Fourth World Leader: trumpet thaumaturge Jon Hassell, forever finding new territories.

Horn of plenty

Trumpeter, theorist and pioneering pan-global collagist, **Jon Hassell** left us on June 26.

IT'S AN over-used epithet, but Jon Hassell was a true visionary, his music effectively a contemplation of possible cultural, philosophical and technological futures – an approach that foreshadowed and informed subsequent conceptions of what ambient and world music could be. According to long-time confrère Brian Eno, Hassell has "planted a strong and fertile seed whose fruits are still being gathered," and, indeed, his influence regularly manifests in contemporary electronica, sampledelica and anywhere that borderless bricolage composition is deployed to conjure sensuous, dream-like realms.

Born in Memphis in 1937, Hassell picked up his father's cornet and played in local big bands before attending the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York, where he began exploring tape composition. Having avoided the draft by joining a Washington DC military band, in 1965 he went to Germany to study with avant-garde magus Karlheinz Stockhausen. He returned to the US having won a fellowship at the Centre for Creative and Performing Arts at SUNY Buffalo, where he dabbled with Moog synthesizers and played on the debut recording of Terry Riley's proto-minimalist opus, *In C*. He would later perform in La Monte Young's Theatre of Eternal Music in New York City and come under the influence of Indian classical singer Pandit Pran Nath, whose Kiranic voicings – alongside Miles Davis's amplified jazz-fusion aesthetic – would impact profoundly on Hassell's heavily ornamented, electronically harmonised trumpet style, once memorably dubbed "calligraphy in the air".

> "His style was memorably dubbed 'calligraphy in the air'."

His debut album, 1978's *Vernal Equinox*, showcased Hassell's *soi-disant* 'Fourth World' approach, a melting pot of ethnic musics and advanced technology – his putative "coffee-coloured classical music of the future". A suitably-beguiled fellow cartographer of sonic terra nueva, Eno would collaborate with Hassell on 1980's sublime *Fourth World Vol. 1: Possible Musics* and Hassell was also involved in Eno and David Byrne's *My Life In The Bush Of Ghosts*, but backed away as he considered his collaborators' take on global music too "touristic". He nonetheless contributed to Talking Heads' *Remain In Light* and Eno's *On Land*, early '80s entrees for cameos with Peter Gabriel, David Sylvian, Ry Cooder and Tears For Fears.

Hassell developed his Fourth World concept on 1982's *Dream Theory In Malaya* and 1986's *Power Spot*, while 1990's *City: Works Of Fiction* drew on hip-hop, 1994's *Dressing For Pleasure* featured contributions from estimable guests such as Flea and Greg Kurstin, and 2008's *Last Night The Moon Came Dropping Its Clothes In The Street* was a deluxe ear-bath for ECM. His final recordings were 2018's *Listening To Pictures* and 2020's *Seeing Through Sound*, both influenced by the painterly technique of pentimento and equally critically lauded. In recent years Hassell was working on a book that expanded upon Fourth World principles, entitled The North And South Of You, An Erotic Worldview. After his passing, a statement by his family read, "It was his great joy to be able to compose and produce music until the end… [he] will continue to play in the Fourth World."

David Sheppard

THE LEGACY

The album: Jon Hassell/Brian Eno *Fourth World Vol. 1: Possible Musics* (EDITIONS EG, 1980)

The sound: Hassell's heavily treated, spectral trumpet flickers across the dense, languorous percussion work of Nana Vasconcelos and Ayibe Dieng, instantly conjuring an immersive, hallucinatory geography. Although credited as co-artist, Eno is effectively 'only' the producer here – his signature reverb washes and ambient effects nonetheless lending further exotic texture to the lush, tropical-narcotic dreamscapes.

Jean-Marc Lubrano

Peter Zinovieff

Artist, scientist, synthesizer pioneer.

BORN 1933

Peter Zinovieff memorably claimed to be the first private citizen in the world to own a home computer, albeit an industrial model with 4k of memory. But using his 1965 Digital Equipment PDP-8, and the tape machines and oscillators that he gathered around it, he opened a fissure into the future of electronic music making.

Born in Fulham to aristocratic refugees from Tsarist Russia, Zinovieff learned piano as a child. A teenage radio ham, he got a taste for experimental music studying geology at Oxford, where he manipulated tapes with a group he called Biscuit Tin. In his thirties he abandoned his civil service career and sold his wife's tiara to found his own electronic studio at home in Putney. In 1966 he formed Unit Delta Plus with BBC Radiophonic Workshop alumni Delia Derbyshire and Brian Hodgson. The short-lived project presented tape music at the two-night Million Volt Light And Sound Rave at the Roundhouse in early '67, where The Beatles' mythic piece Carnival Of Light received its only public airings (Zinovieff had previously played Paul McCartney experimental music at high volume in his sunken garden studio and later recalled tutoring Ringo Starr in the ways of synths). Zinovieff's groundbreaking solo work of the period included his bleep-blooping Partita For Unaccompanied Computer, which divided critics at Queen Elizabeth Hall the same year.

Yet it was after he co-founded the Electronic Music Studios with David Cockerell and Tristram Cary, in 1969, that his influence on music would most widely manifest. Zinovieff's plan was to finance a studio through selling affordable synthesizers including the VCS3, Synthi 100, Synthi AKS and the Vocoder. Portable and democratic, they would in time be used by Kraftwerk, Pink Floyd, David Bowie, Tangerine Dream, Hawkwind, Sly Stone, Jean Michel Jarre, Led Zeppelin, Stockhausen, Roxy Music, The Who and others. In later life Zinovieff called these instruments "rather pathetic" compared to EMS's wider-ranging technological innovation and excellence. EMS stopped trading in 1979 and its studio, stowed in a storeroom at the National Theatre, was later destroyed by flooding. Zinovieff largely retreated from music for the next decades, though his libretto for Sir Harrison Birtwistle's opera The Mask Of Orpheus would be heard in 1986.

He returned to writing in 2010, composing Bridges From Somewhere And Another To Somewhere Else for Austrian arts organisation TBA21, while in 2015 Sonic Boom compiled *Electronic Calendar: The EMS Tapes*. Zinovieff continued to write for international festivals and collaborators including cellist Lucy Railton and poet Katrina Porteous. His final work with the latter, Under The Ice, had its online premiere on June 23, when he died after a short period of ill-heath.

Ian Harrison

Plugged in: Peter Zinovieff turns the dials at EMS.

Xxxx xxxxxxxx xxx
xxx xxxxx xxxxx xx
xxx xx xxxxxxxxx

Getty (3), Alamy

Slide guitar sensation: Ellen McIlwaine, doing it her way.

Ellen McIlwaine

Bluesy folk funk guitar

BORN 1945

A Greenwich Village veteran who supported everyone from Muddy Waters to Richard Pryor, Nashville-born Ellen McIlwaine played multiple roles: psychedelic bandleader with Atlanta rockers Fear Itself, slide guitar sensation, itinerant blueswoman and global music evangelist. She was also a rare groove choice, thanks to her unique covers of Albert King, Blind Faith and Stevie Wonder on '70s albums including *Honky Tonky Angel* and *The Real Ellen McIlwaine*. Yet, in the week that MOJO 333 arrived on shelves extolling her continuing relevance as a Cult Hero, she decided it was her time to go. She spent her last years driving a school bus and working on a bio-documentary, and to the last did everything on her own terms, with no regrets and hopes to record again. She died, aged 75, at a hospice in her adopted home of Calgary, Alberta.

Andy Morris

Gift Of Gab

Poetic rap technician

BORN 1971

Born Timothy Parker, Blackalicious rapper Gift Of Gab was known as Tiny Tim when he met DJ and lifelong creative foil Chief Xcel at the University of California, Davis, and hatched a plan to become Sacramento's "version of Run-D.M.C.". Inducted into the Solesides collective with DJ Shadow and Lyrics Born, they broke cover with 1992's first EP Melodica. Humble, philosophical and wry, his intricate, limber rhymes often defied punctuation (Lyric Fathom, Alphabet Aerobics), but he was equally adept at constructing breathable verses (Swan Lake), the clarity of his positive messages peaking on 2002's chart-busting *Blazing Arrow*. Despite a 2012 kidney disease diagnosis, Gab continued to write prolifically – a borrowed-time narrative percolating through 2015's *Imani Vol. 1* – and his work ethic belied Blackalicious's relatively slim output. He died of natural causes, leaving behind nearly 100 unreleased tracks.

Andy Cowan

> "Zinovieff sold his wife's tiara to found his own electronic studio."

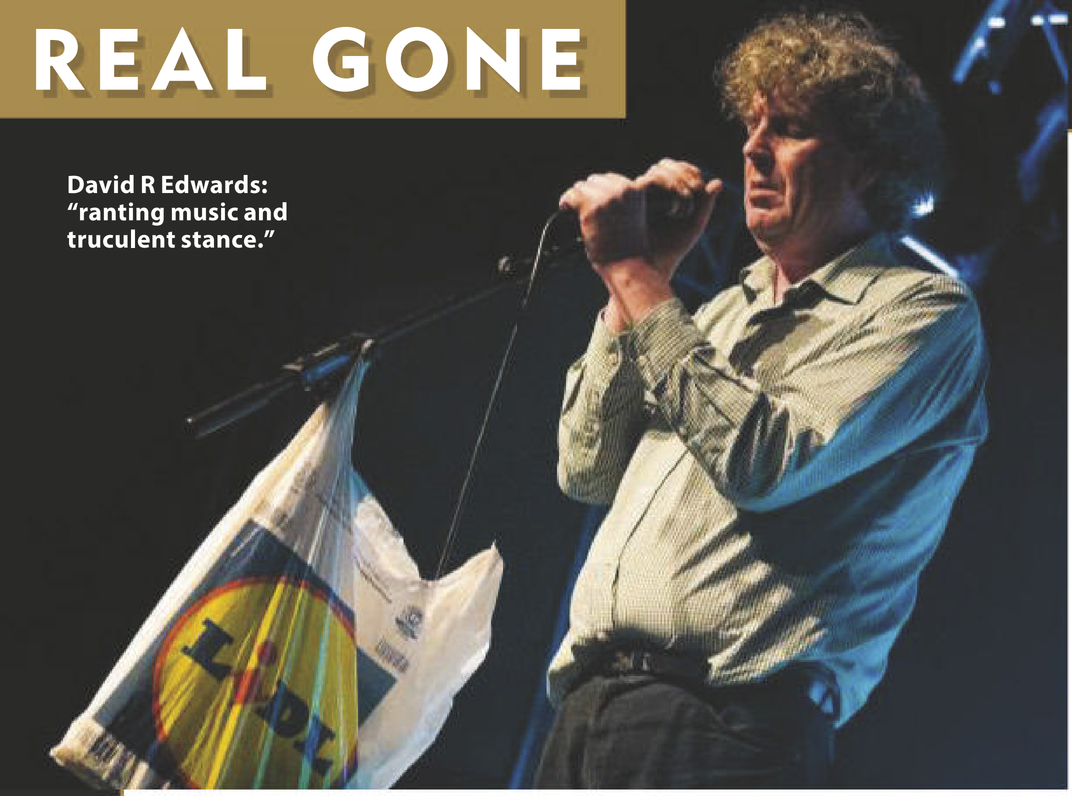
Patrick Sky

Folk singer and satirist

BORN 1940

A Georgia-born country boy with an aw-shucks demeanour, Patrick Sky moved to Greenwich Village in the early '60s, and like folkie friends Buffy Sainte-Marie and Peter La Farge was part-Native American. He recorded his self-titled debut for Vanguard Records in 1965 and the album's wistful, weary Many A Mile captured the era's wanderlust and became a staple. His more rascally side composed Talking Socialized Anti-Undertaker Blues, a folk compilation cut that mocked greed in the death racket. In 1971 he recorded the satirical *Songs That Made America Famous*, but no one would release it until 1973. An exceptionally crude and offensive album, it was also fiercely funny, tackling ethnicity, religion, war and beyond. The old-school nonconformist moved onto folklore studies and played the Uilleann pipes with his wife at weddings and funerals, and on the 2009 album *Down To Us*.

Michael Simmons



David R Edwards: "ranting music and truculent stance."

David R Edwards

Welsh underground legend

BORN 1964

Born in Aberteifi, Ceredigion, David R Edwards formed Datblygu – 'development', in English – with school friend T Wyn Davies in 1982. Singing in Welsh of the Welsh experience, and kicking against what he saw as the backwards-looking Welsh media and music scene, his group was likened to The Fall, and similarly proved that one listener's spikey turn-off was another's world of startling imagination. After initial cassettes of portastudio post-punk, Datblygu graduated to vinyl with 1986's Hwgr-Grawth-Og EP, and recorded the first of five John Peel sessions in 1987 (the DJ wrote admiringly of their "ranting music and truculent stance"). Lauded by his home audience for personal and political lyrics, Edwards' arresting voice and rhythmic delivery also won non-Welsh-speaking fans who knew something unique was happening, without being sure what. Later releases *Pyst* (1990) and *Libertino* (1993) developed stylistically and refined the vision further, but while Datblygu were present alongside Super Furry Animals, Catatonia and others on 1996's comp *Triskedekaphilia*, they would not share in the spoils of the Welsh rock upsurge they'd helped bring about, with Edwards suffering from deteriorating mental health. He and bassist Patricia Morgan would return to Datblygu in 2008, and released three more albums including last August's *Cwm Gwagle*. He wrote his biography Atgofion Hen Wanc in 2009 and made several spoken word recordings. Among those paying tribute were Gruff Rhys, who called Edwards "a gigantic figure."

Ian Harrison

Dean Parrish

He's on his way

BORN 1942

Philip Anastasi's long and colourful journey through the entertainment industry is perhaps best remembered for his time as Northern soul icon Dean Parrish, whose stirring 1967 single I'm On My Way was one of three 45s traditionally spun at the end of Wigan Casino weekenders, until its final closure in 1981. Born in New York City, Anastasi sang in doo-wop groups and frequented the Peppermint Lounge on West 45th Street, where The Ronettes' Veronica Bennett (Ronnie Spector to be) is said to have suggested a name change. He recorded for several labels as Parrish in the mid '60s, but as that career waned, he reverted to his real name and took acting roles, appearing in The Sopranos, while he played sessions for Jimi Hendrix and Santana. In '75, a reissued I'm On My Way peaked at UK 38. Anastasi, unaware of his Northern soul fame, was eventually alerted and resurfaced as Parrish in 2001, becoming a regular at weekenders. He began recording again, covering Paul Weller's lost Jam song Left Right & Centre in 2006.

Geoff Brown

THEY ALSO SERVED

BASSIST **JUAN NELSON** (b.1958, below) played with **Ben Harper**'s **Innocent Criminals** on albums from 1995's *Fight For Your Mind* to 2016's *Call It What It Is*. Born in Cincinnati, Ohio, Nelson moved to California in the 1960s where he took up bass as a child, becoming a skilled and soulful player as well as an extravagant performer. Known for his virtuosic solos, Nelson was also noted for his work with **Big Advice**, **Brenda Russell**, **Charles Wright**, **Yanni** and more.

MAGAZINE EDITOR **ALAN LEWIS** (b.c.1945) was a tireless and inspirational figure at the forefront of British music journalism for over four decades. Beginning at Melody Maker in 1969, in the '70s he founded Black Music magazine before moving on to edit Sounds, NME and, later, Record Collector. He also launched Kerrang! and played a key role in the creation of Uncut, Number One, Vox and Loaded. MOJO was one of the few magazines he didn't have a hand in, but many of us are indebted to his trust, guidance and quietly imparted publishing genius.

PRODUCER, keyboardist, guitarist and songwriter **PHIL JOHNSTONE** (b.1957) worked closely with **Robert Plant** on 1988's *Now And Zen* and 1990's *Manic Nirvana*, also contributing to 1993's *Fate Of Nations*. He later collaborated with **Alannah Myles**, **The Levellers** and **Kirsty MacColl**, led festival group **The Fabulous Good Time Party Boys** and worked at Studio 54 in Exeter.

FREE JAZZ pianist **BURTON GREENE** (b.1937, below) played bebop in Chicago before hitting the NY scene in the early '60s: before the decade was out, he worked with **Marion Brown**, **Rashied Ali** and **Albert Ayler** among others, joined **The Jazz Composers Guild** (alongside Sun Ra, Archie Shepp and Cecil Taylor), recorded his own albums for ESP-Disk and appeared on the extraordinary version of Black Is The Color Of My True Love's Hair on **Patty Waters**' 1966 LP *Sings*. Claiming to be the first free-jazzer to play the piano's innards, Greene later relocated to a houseboat in Amsterdam and carried on exploring: his last LP was 2019's *Life's Intense Mystery*.

DRUMMER **FLORIAN PILKINGTON-MIKSA** (b.1950) played with **Sisyphus**, who morphed into **Curved Air** in 1970. He played on that band's UK Number 4 hit Back Street Luv in 1971, but left after 1972's *Phantasmagoria* to join **Kiki Dee**'s group. He rejoined Curved Air in 1974 for a VAT bill-paying reunion tour, and on numerous occasions afterwards, until 2017. He also worked as a sculptor, specialising in angelic figures.

TRUMPETER and Detroit jazz legend **JOHNNY TRUDELL** (b.1939) played lead and directed brass sections at Motown sessions in the 1960s and 1970s, appearing on recordings including *What's Going On*. Renowned as a bandleader, he was also a composer, and recorded 1979's disco-jazz *Dream Dream* and 1993's *But Beautiful*. He was also known for nurturing other local talent, and co-founded the Michigan Jazz Festival.

KEYBOARDIST **DAVID C LEWIS** (b.1953) joined LA prog-jazzers **Ambrosia** for 1978's US Top 10 *Life Beyond LA*, which featured US Top 10 single How Much I Feel. After the group split in 1982, he joined **Shadowfax**, winning a New Age Grammy for 1988's *Folksongs For A Nuclear Village*. He also played with **Demis Roussos** and **Juliet Roberts**, and later rejoined the reformed Ambrosia.

MASSACHUSETTS-born composer **FREDERIC RZEWSKI** (b.1938) wrote 1975's Grammy-nominated freedom variations *The People United Will Never Be Defeated!*. Rzewski had studied at Harvard and later in Europe, where he embraced free improvisation, anti-establishment thinking and experimental techniques such as placing sheets of glass on the strings of a piano (Composition For Two Players). A musical and ideological radical, Rzewski performed in a series of concerts by 'gestural composers' at New York's Judson Hall in 1963, where he read poetry against a backing of piano, alarm clock, power saw, ping-pong ball and squeaky rubber dolls. One of his best-known works, Coming Together, was inspired by the Attica Prison rebellion.

MOSRITE GUITARIST **TAKESHI TERAUCHI** (b.1939) was a presence in Japanese instrumental rock from 1962, when he formed **Terry & The Blue Jeans**. As well as dozens of albums with them, other activities included *The Brilliant Dimension Of Terry* solo series, a 1987 album with Venture **Nokie Edwards** and a role in the 1965 beat movie Ereki no Wakadaishō (Young Electric Guitar General).

LONDON-BORN GUITARIST **VIC BRIGGS** (b.1945, below) played The Cavern and backed **Jerry Lee Lewis** and **Dusty Springfield** with **The Echoes**. He later played with **Steampacket**, **Brian Auger & The Trinity** and **Johnny Halliday** before joining **Eric Burdon** and **The Animals** in 1966. Fired from the group in 1968, he worked as a producer/arranger at Capitol and later embraced Sikhism, playing Sikh devotional music as **Antion Vikram Singh**. He also played Hawaiian music and taught yoga in New Zealand.

John Mulvey, Jenny Bulley and Ian Harrison

Eyevine, Getty (3), Courtesy Ace Records

All types of memorabilia inlcuding vintage posters, t-shirts and clothing, promo shop displays, handbills, tickets, tour laminates and much more!!!

WHOSWAX

The Music Memorabilia Specialist

www.whoswax.co.uk

GET MOJO ON YOUR DIGITAL DEVICES...

SUBSCRIBE TODAY FOR GREAT DIGITAL DEALS IN THE APP

- Download issues in seconds
- Access back issues instantly
- Read offline anytime, anywhere
- Read issues across different devices

MOJO

Available on the App Store

GET IT ON Google play

To Advertise in

MOJO

Classified

Please call Max Garwood on

01733 366405

MOJO RECORD STORE DIRECTORY

Vinyl Eddie

An Aladdin's Cave of rarities, collectables and new vinyl awaits.

86 Tadcaster Road, York, YO24 1LR
www.vinyleddie.co.uk 07975 899839

Fish Records

New vinyl and CDs plus pre-loved vinyl. Wide selection with particular specialism in roots and Americana music.

Unit 2, Crown Courtyard, Crown Street, Stone, Staffordshire, ST15 8UY
www.fishrecords.co.uk 01785 818847

The Vinyl Whistle

A classic indie record shop, with four rooms of vinyl in the heart of Headingley serving coffee, beer and live music.

12 Otley Road, Headingley, Leeds LS6 2AD
www.vinylwhistle.co.uk 0113 4260588

Winyl

An independent wine & vinyl record store in Manningtree, specialising in vegan & organic wine to enjoy in or take away, plus new and 'vintage' vinyl.

16 South Street, Manningtree, Essex CO11 1BB
www.winyl.co.uk 01206 234089

The Sound Machine

Reading's longest established independent collectors record shop.

24 Harris Arcade, Reading, RG1 1DN
www.thesoundmachine.uk.com 0118 957 5075

Five Rise Records

We are a physical and online record store, run by music lovers for music lovers.

30C Park Road, Bingley, West Yorkshire, BD16 4JQ
www.fiveriserecords.co.uk 01274 512867

TO ADVERTISE PLEASE CALL MAX ON 01733 366405

DONNA SUMMER
CAN'T WE JUST SIT DOWN (And Talk It Over)
STEREO
SIDE A
DONNA SUMMER
I FEEL LOVE
SIDE B
I FEEL LOVE
CAN'T WE JUST SIT DOWN
DONNA SUMMER

The drawers of perception: (clockwise from main) Donna Summer and her assistants on-stage: original single labels and 45 sleeve; Summer sings; with I Feel Love co-writer and co-producer Giorgio Moroder (right).

AUGUST 1977 ...Donna Summer Feels Love

AUGUST 6 Punk may have been raging, but disco was reaching its commercial peak in '77. Furthermore, between the opening of Studio 54 in New York in April and Saturday Night Fever hitting movie screens in December, there was a disco hit that revolutionised what popular music could be. Spending its third week as Britain's Number 1 as August began, Donna Summer's mechanoid-yet-libidinous I Feel Love predicted nothing less than the future of electronic music.

Its co-producer and co-writer, Giorgio Moroder, was happily nonplussed. “We did it just as an album track,” he told Record Mirror later that year. “Donna finished in 10 minutes. Neither of us thought it would be as big as it's been.”

Summer was a versatile pop vocalist from Boston who'd moved to West Germany to be in a production of Hair. She'd already enjoyed worldwide success with 1975's torrid Love To Love You Baby, co-written with Moroder and Pete Bellotte, his production partner at Munich's Musicland Studios. The song included sufficient orgasmic groaning to warrant an airplay ban from the BBC, but Summer was unruffled. “In Germany it's very hard to make a decent record because they have no taste,” she told Sounds. “So the only way is to shock them and then they will start to accept you.”

The road to I Feel Love began with *I Remember Yesterday*, Summer's fifth album with Moroder and Bellotte. Released in May '77, it was conceived of as a disco album which revisited the sounds of previous decades, variously taking in '40s big band stylings, Spectoresque girl group drama and Motown. The album's closer, I Feel Love was intended as a sudden leap into the future – coloured, no doubt, by Wendy Carlos fan Moroder's interest in electronic sound, which had already manifested on his 1972 hit Son Of My Father. Moroder admitted that he'd briefly considered the cantina music from Star Wars as a possible blueprint: “[But] I didn't think it was the music of the future,” he told The Guardian in 2015. “I thought, the only way to do it is to do it with only computers.”

> “To me, discos are indoor playgrounds.”
> **DONNA SUMMER**

Working at Musicland in early '77, the vehicle used to achieve fusion was a Moog modular synthesizer borrowed from composer Eberhard Schoener. The lush disco norms of strings and horns were replaced by a driving electronic pulse marshalled by Moog expert and Schoener technician Robbie Wedel. Adding delay to the throbbing bass line, Moroder sculpted a snare drum sound from white noise generated by the Moog, though the metronomic thump of the bass drum came courtesy of London-born session man Keith Forsey. A human heartbeat among the oscillators, Forsey also played with Moroder's Munich Machine on '77's racy near-hit Get On The Funk Train.

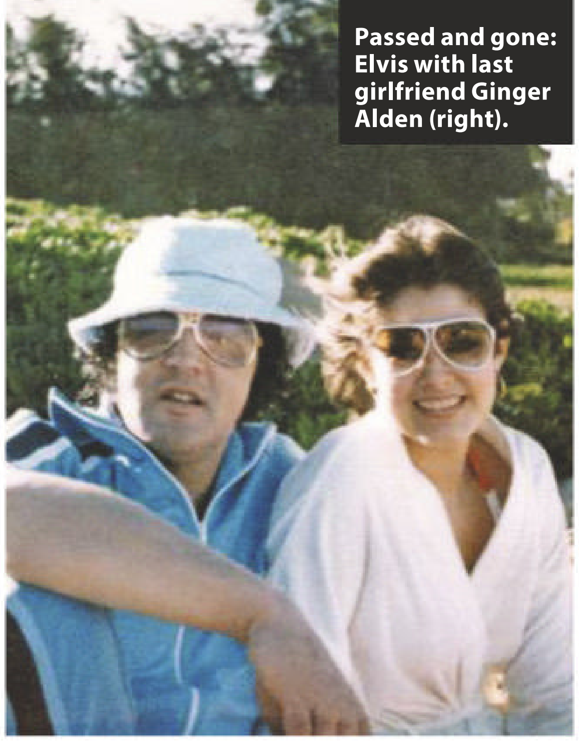
In 2017, Bellotte told Mixmag's Bill Brewster that before she recorded her vocal, Summer had been in discussions with her astrologer about new love interest Bruce Sudano of blue-eyed soul act Brooklyn Dreams. Sudano was declared a keeper. Infused with emotion, she cut the song in a high, breathy register in a single take, losing herself in the minimal lyrics of heightened awareness and erotic-spiritual communion.

Though the single was initially released on the flip of sentimental slowie Can't We Just Sit Down (And Talk It Over), its success in clubs turned the tables and it was soon topping charts across the globe, peaking at Number 6 in the US in November. Admirers including The Human League, Blondie, Sparks and Simple Minds all fell under its spell: David Bowie recalled Brian Eno giving him a copy of the record with the words, "This single is going to change the sound of club music for the next 15 years."

Another fissure to the future came with Hi-NRG producer Patrick Cowley's epic 1978 bootleg rework, a virtuoso example of the remixer's art. "People wanna dance, they wanna move," Summer reflected to Smash Hits in 1979. "To me, discos are indoor playgrounds where people go to wind down from their frustrations."

In '77, she wasn't slowing down. In September, Down Deep Inside, her theme to scuba-diving adventure movie The Deep, hit Number 5, and she'd have another 17 UK Top 20 hits before her death in 2012. She stopped working with Moroder in 1981, though the two reunited for 1992 Grammy winner Carry On. Moroder continued to produce with distinction and worked in film, coming back into sharp focus when he worked with Daft Punk on 2013's *Random Access Memories*. In recent years he turned to DJing, and no set is complete without I Feel Love. As he said of the song in his Daft Punk collaboration Giorgio By Moroder, "I knew that could be a sound of the future, but I didn't realise how much the impact would be."

Ian Harrison


Passed and gone: Elvis with last girlfriend Ginger Alden (right).

Farewell To The King

AUGUST 16 **With the news that an individual was having difficulty breathing, an ambulance is called to 3764 Elvis Presley Boulevard at 2.33pm. The patient is taken to Memphis' Baptist Memorial Hospital, but at 3.30pm Elvis Presley is declared dead, aged 42. He was to fly to Portland, Maine that night to begin a New England tour. The following day The Commercial Appeal runs the headline, 'Death Captures Crown Of Rock And Roll – Elvis Dies Apparently After Heart Attack', and an estimated 100,000 flock to Graceland to view his body. On the 26th, Presley's late mother Gladys is re-interred in her son's mausoleum, while on August 30th three men are charged with planning to steal Elvis's mortal remains. The case is later dropped.**

Lie lie lie lie? Sid Vicious (left) and Johnny Rotten hide in plain sight.

Vive le Rock

THE PISTOLS TOUR IN DISGUISE

AUGUST 19 Tired of having their concerts cancelled, the Sex Pistols play dates using secret identities. They begin at Wolverhampton's Lafayette Club, billed as 'SPOTS' ('Sex Pistols On Tour Secretly'). Over the next two weeks they play Doncaster, Scarborough, Middlesbrough, Plymouth and Penzance, billed as, respectively, the Tax Exiles, Special Guest, Acne Rabble, The Hamsters and A Mystery Band Of International Repute. "I don't think we should be playing for them poxy student hippies," bassist Sid Vicious notes to NME earlier in the month. "I reckon we should tell 'em we don't play unless they let the kids in." Drummer Paul Cook observes that word got out enough for the shows to be well-attended. The Pistols split five months later.

Getty (6), Shutterstock, Advertising Archives

ALSO ON!

LET'S HANSA

8 **David Bowie** (above), assisted by **Tony Visconti** and **Brian Eno**, finishes recording *"Heroes"* at Hansa in West Berlin. "We spent a lot of time laughing… at our pretentiousness," he reflects in November. On the 29th, Iggy Pop's *Lust For Life* is released with co-producer Bowie on keyboards.

TOTP DRAW

11 On at 7.10pm, tonight's Top Of The Pops features performances from **Eddie & The Hot Rods**, **Barry Biggs** and **Showaddywaddy**. Over on Radio 2 at 7.33pm, there's jazz from **The John Gregory Big Band** and **The Betty Smith Sextet**.

INTO SPACE

21 NASA's space probe Voyager 2 is launched from Cape Canaveral. For interested alien life, it contains a gold-plated 'Sounds Of Earth' record featuring voices, images and songs by **Chuck Berry**, **Blind Willie Johnson** and others.

DENNIS WHOPPER

22 *Pacific Ocean Blue*, the sole solo LP by **Dennis Wilson** is released. He claims another is ready for January 1978 and that a **Beach Boys** album *Adult/Child* is imminent. Neither appear.

MUDDY SABBATH

26 Reading Rock '77 hosts a weekend of **Uriah Heep**, **Thin Lizzy**, **SAHB** and many more. The site is waterlogged, so DJ John Peel raises spirits by leading a chant of "John Peel Is A Cunt".

TOP TEN

AUSTRIAN SINGLES
AUGUST 15

1 **BONEY M** MA BAKER
HANSA INTERNATIONAL

2 **MORT SHUMAN** SORROW
PHILIPS

3 **OLIVER ONIONS** ORZOWEI
RCA

4 **BACCARA** YES SIR, I CAN BOOGIE RCA

5 **SMOKIE** LAY BACK IN THE ARMS OF SOMEONE RAK

6 **SMOKIE** IT'S YOUR LIFE
RAK

7 **DONNA SUMMER** I FEEL LOVE
ATLANTIC

8 **LYNSEY DE PAUL & MIKE MORAN** ROCK BOTTOM
POLYDOR

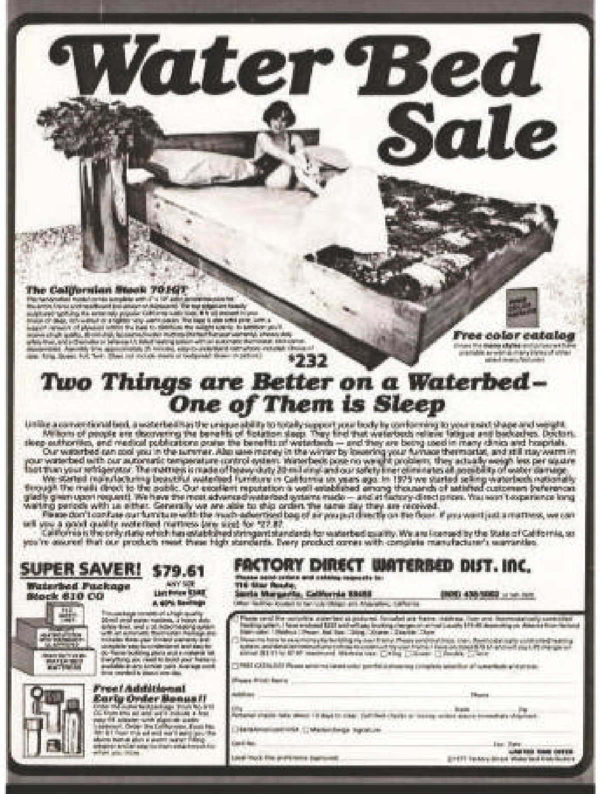
9 **SPRINGTIME** MR. CAPTAIN
ATOM

10 **STEVIE WONDER** SIR DUKE MOTOWN

Alpine stars: Lynsey De Paul and Mike Moran (left), at 8.

ROCK BOTTOM

AD ARCHIVE 1977



Water Bed Sale

Free color catalog

$232

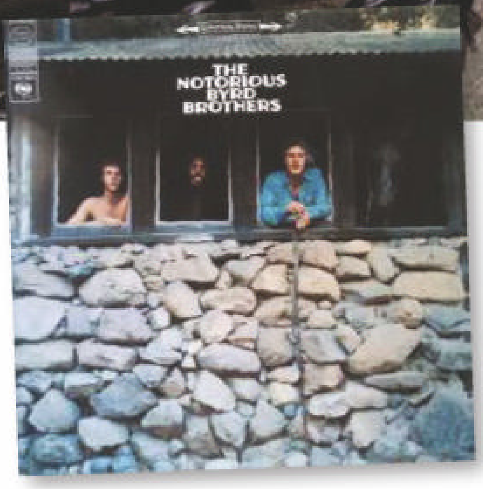
Two Things are Better on a Waterbed – One of Them is Sleep

SUPER SAVER! $79.61

Free! Additional Early Order Bonus!!

FACTORY DIRECT WATERBED DIST. INC.

Big in California, waterbed sales soar globally. Great for an aching back, not so good for saving that weak floor upstairs from collapse. Float on!



Reel Gone: (clockwise from left) footballing tape wiper Elton John (right), training for The 'Orns with his pal Phyllis; The Shangri-Las with Mary Weiss (centre); The Byrds' rustic hideaway; TD's Edgar Froese says, Rewind!

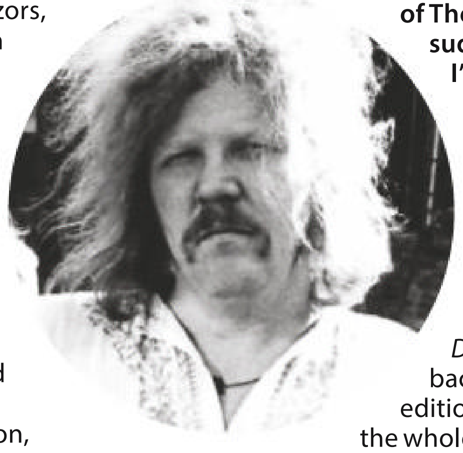
Who destroyed their own masters?

Time to resolve rock'n'roll's enduring queries and eerie synchronicities, so sleep may come again.

Wikipedia browsing makes me wince when it reminds me about how the 2008 Universal fire destroyed so many artists' master tapes. But who out there destroyed their music intentionally, like Brian Wilson reputedly did with the *Smile* tapes?

Olly Murray, via e-mail

MOJO says: The most famous example is Jean Michel Jarre, who took a stand against what he called the CD age's "industrialisation of music" when he pressed one copy of 1983's *Musique Pour Supermarché* and destroyed the master and vinyl stamper. But there are numerous other examples. When John Fogerty's 1976 long-player *Hoodoo* was rejected by his Asylum label, he flew from Los Angeles to San Francisco and chopped up the tapes with razors, a few songs excepted, though an in-house cassette was later bootlegged. In 1977, Elton John's limited edition charity football single The Goaldiggers Song had its masters junked to prevent reissuing, while a frustrated Chris Bell *would* have erased the master for Big Star's 1972 debut *#1 Record* had producer Terry Manning not substituted another reel in its place. The tales of deliberate erasure go on, including Link Wray's assertion that his brother and one-time manager Vernon binned numerous crucial master tapes after a falling out; the original bossa nova version of I'm Not In Love getting canned because 10cc thought it was "crap"; and Foo Fighters cutting up the analogue tapes for 2011's *Wasting Light* and including a piece with initial CD copies of the album. Anyone else remember any good examples of hot-headed master tape auto-destruction?



WHERE'S MARY WEISS?

Re Reigning Sound in MOJO 332. I was a big fan of the record Greg Cartwright made with Mary Weiss (2007's *Dangerous Game*). Was there any word on if she was ever going to make another?

Wayne Hodges, via e-mail

MOJO says: Sadly, Greg was not convinced that the ever-private Mary will, describing *Dangerous Game* as "a final love letter to an audience who wondered what had happened to her." "I talk to Mary sometimes," he added fondly. "Her and her husband moved to California but I saw her in New York not long ago… I was totally honoured that she wanted this guy to help her with the songs on that album. I was totally moved by that."

WHO RAN BACKWARDS?

I heard the Norwegian single version of The Who's Run Run Run, which suddenly plays backwards at the end. I'm presuming it's a cock-up, and I've heard anecdotally of a classical album which was accidentally pressed in reverse. Any other concrete examples?

Paul Hampson, via e-mail

MOJO says: Oddly enough, Edgar Froese was involved twice: the 1979 German comp *Electronic Dreams* featured Maroubra Bay backwards, and there's also a French edition of Tangerine Dream's *Zeit* where the whole thing runs in reverse. Similarly back to front are early pressings of Scientist's 1999 dub set *Mach One: Beyond The Sound Barrier*, whose side one plays backwards – and a reissue cassette mispress of *Never Mind The Bollocks* (very avant-garde). We should also mention the time that John Peel famously played a reel to reel of Fripp And Eno's 1973 experimental *(No Pussyfooting)* backwards, and Eno called in to let him know – apparently the response was, "that's what they all say". In tribute, a 2008 CD reissue added newly-created backwards versions of the two tracks. Very witty – or should be yttiw yrev?

WHERE WAS THAT STABLE?

The front cover of the great 1968 LP by The Byrds, *The Notorious Byrd Brothers*, shows three-quarters of the band in what looks like a horse stable, doubtless somewhere in California. A little over one year later, a photo of Linda Ronstadt at the same location appears on the back cover of her solo debut LP, *Hand Sown… Home Grown* (1969). Where is that stable or shed located? As a native southern Californian, I would love to know.

Dean Kolbas, Boston

MOJO says: The outbuilding still stands in Topanga, California on a property valued at around $3 million.

HELP MOJO

Re Dr E J Robinson's question regarding live debut albums (Ask MOJO 331). On Sham 69's first LP, *Tell Us The Truth*, side one is live. But, where was it recorded?

Nick Moon, email

MOJO says: Over to you, readers. And for more live-LPs-as-debuts suggestions, thanks also to readers Fred Muller (Fat Freddy's Drop's *Live At The Matterhorn*), Michel Breuker (Peter And The Test Tube Babies' *Pissed And Proud*) and Dil Longstaffe, who nominated LPs including Nine Below Zero's *Live At The Marquee*, Michelle Shocked's *The Texas Campfire Tapes* and *Needle Time* by Warsaw Pakt, which, in 1977, earned a place in the Guinness Book Of Records for being recorded, pressed and in the shops all within 24 hours.

CONTACT MOJO

Have you got a challenging musical question for the MOJO Brains Trust? E-mail **askmojo@bauermedia.co.uk** and we'll help untangle your trickiest puzzles.

Getty (3)

An Amp Shining

Win! A Cyrus Audio ONE Cast amplifier!

YOU'VE GOT the speakers. Add Cyrus Audio's ONE Cast and now you've got a state-of-the-art music entertainment system. The Cyrus ONE Cast is an all-in-one smart integrated amplifier that offers outstanding audio quality and versatility. Compatible with Bluetooth, Apple Airplay, Google Cast, and Alexa, you can use voice commands to stream audio/video content wirelessly from your phone, computer, or tablet.

The ONE Cast has many audiophile wired connection options, including an HDMI® ARC port for TV, MM phono stage inputs for turntables, A/V inputs to connect to a home cinema, and a USB port for your computer. And it has an RRP of £1,299!

So get this month's crossword completed asap, and send a scan of it to mojo@bauermedia.co.uk, making sure to type CROSSWORD 334 in the subject line. Entries without that subject line will not be considered. Please include your home address, e-mail and phone number.

Closing date for entries is **September 2**.

For the rules of the quiz, go to: www.mojo4music.com

www.cyrusaudio.com

ANSWERS

MOJO 331

Across: 1 Nick Lowe, 5 I Got You, 10 The Drugs Don't Work, 12 Go Now, 14 Captain Paralytic, 17 Angels, 18 Styx, 20 Prefab, 22 I.O.U., 23 Head, 25 At Last, 27 Nancy Boy, 30 Cry, 32 Abba, 34 Yes I Will, 36 UK Subs, 37 Anger, 38 Lol Creme, 40 Sheila, 41 Son Volt, 43 Ode, 45 Red Book, 46 A.Forest, 47 Stooges, 48 L.A. Woman, 50 Hi Ho, 51 USSR, 52 TSOP, 57 Ritter, 58 Ozric, 59 Neko Case, 60 Lau, 61 Single, 62 Nonet, 63 Elaine, 64 Meg.

Down: 1 Nat Cole, 2 Cher, 3 Lorca, 4 We Get By, 6 Gene Parsons, 7/35 Tower Of Song, 8 Oar, 9 Eddie, 11 Keys, 13 Ornette Coleman, 15 Idea, 16 Is It Like Today?, 18 Sun Blues, 19 XTC, 21 ABC, 23 Hyaena, 24 DOA, 26 Ali, 28 Nelson, 29 Yarbrough, 31 Angel Of Harlem, 33 Bread, 37 Allen, 39 Cab, 40 Stash, 42 Outa-Space, 43 Otis Grand, 44 Extricate, 49 Orange, 53 Press, 54 Sting, 55 Young, 56 Roni.

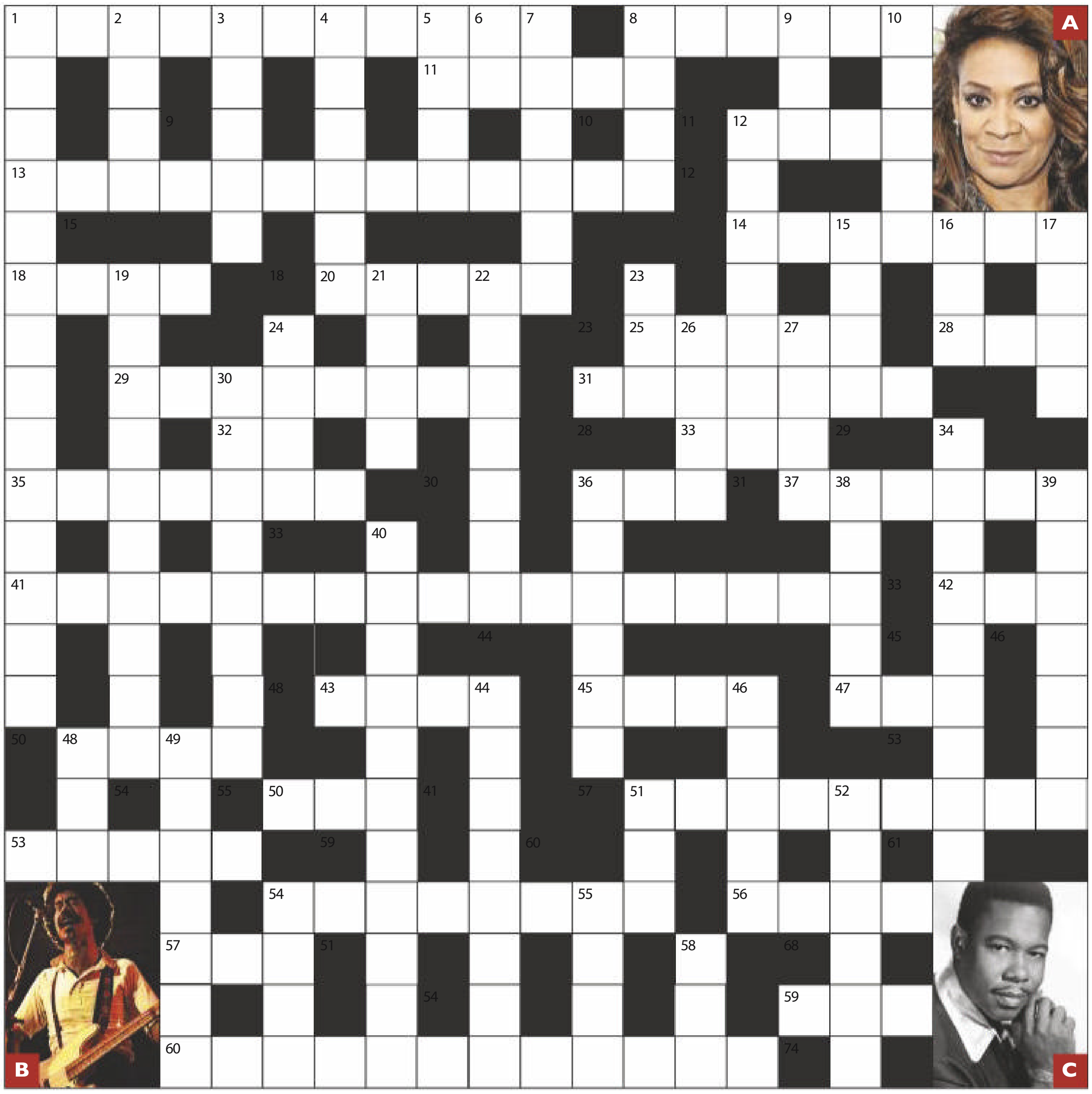
Winner: Fiona Buchanan of **Birmingham** wins a *Dark Side Of The Moon* tape box print and other Pink Floyd goodies.

ACROSS

1 Madness producer, member of Deaf School and The Boxes (5,6)
8 Hampton, Richie or Limiñana? (6)
11 Neutrino's MC pal (5)
12 An unadulterated hit for The Lightning Seeds (4)
13 He was Radio Caroline's errant mastermind (5,8)
14 See photoclue A (7)
18 Ian Brown's goatish nickname (4)
20 Jamaican folk music form (5)
25 Glasgow DJs Slam get the blues? (5)
28/39 down Punk drummer and Holy Grail chaser (3,6)
29 Sisters Of Mercy declare sovereignty in '87 (8)
31 Teddy Osei's evergreen Afro-rockers (7)
32 George Michael and Mary J. Blige duet (2)
33 Alice Cooper's school status (3)
35 Folkways founder (3,4)
36 Anti-fascist Sheffield label (3)
37 Soaring '70s megastars (6)
41/46 down Hawkwind's grandiose greasy spoon? (4,2,3,8,5)
42 London reggae label which released Errol Dunkley, Sugar Minott and others (3)
43 Cate Le Bon's crustacean day (4)
45 Luke Vibert had this Bash Street alter ego (4)
47 New Order's kind of Culture (3)
48 Everything But The Girl's blissful beginning (4)
50 Byrds' raga-rock question (3)
51 Medway garage Mods stuck in lockdown? (9)
53 Howlin' Pelle's itchy rockers (5)
54 Chicken Shack proprietor (4,4)
56 See 10 down
59/57 Cocktail-shaking pop act of the '80s (3,3)
62 Mott's mighty bassist (7,5)

DOWN

1 See photoclue B (7,7)
2 Maiden, Butterfly or Claw? (4)
3 X's Ms Cervenka (5)
4 Oz's agitational prog metallers? (6)
5 Black-clad sub-cult (4)
6 Dutch post-punks The -- (2)
7 Aristocratic Britpop band (6)
8 Roulette record label's heavyweight boss Morris (4)
9 Rother and Dinger (3)
10/56 across Fairport's two principles in 1969 (5,4)
12 Dwellers in Dub Housing (4,3)
15 Eminem had them about jealousy (4)
16 Sticky Visage 45 (3)
17 James Brown got 'em in his pants (4)
19 See photoclue C (5,5)
21 Vainglorious record label? (4)
22 Tangerine Dream's 1980 puzzle (7)
23 AKA 'Escobar' and 'Nasty' (3)
24 Silver or black, you spin them (4)
26 A Silver Mt. ---- (4)
27 Julian Cope and Donald Ross Skinner's '93 space rock ceremony (4)
30 Trunk-waving Atlanta band (8)
34 What Scritti Politti had with White Bread (5,4)
36 German rockers fronted by Inga Rumpf (5)
38 Gigolo, Red or Agony? (5)
39 See 28 across (5)
40 Her big hit was Catch The Cat (6,6)
44 New York Dolls' dancing direction in 2011 (8)
46 See 41 across
48 They only did 'cos of fame! (3)
49 Planet Rock was its anthem (7)
51 Initially, Pet Shop Boys (3)
52 Beck's biggest long-player (6)
54 Boo Radley, Eggman (4)
55 Banjo pickin' Mr Fleck (4)
58 The Slits' incisive debut (3)



Getty (3)

The End Of The Westworld: late-period Theatre Of Hate (from left) Stan Stammers, John 'Boy' Lennard, Kirk Brandon, Nigel Preston and Billy Duffy.

Kirk Brandon and Theatre Of Hate

It kicked off with accidental avant-garde fusion, and came crashing down on the verge of a US tour.

HELLO SUMMER 1980

I'd come out the other side of [punk band] The Pack and escaped with my life. The Pack thing was all mixed up with the punks, the left-wing thing, squats, the Brixton scene, that whole Tooting scene, the thugs, the drugs and the petty gangsters. It was very, very violent – people getting killed and people overdosing… South London was like a nuthouse then.

But I still wanted to do music. Me and Steve Guthrie [guitar], my old schoolmate, always had the idea of getting a band together. I'd met Stanley Stammers [bass] on the tube, he was playing in The Straps, and we gave him a ring and it clicked. Luke Rendle, who'd been working for the guy who briefly managed The Pack, said he drummed, so I said, "Come to the Sunday School" [rehearsal space in Elephant & Castle]. We all liked Roxy Music so we said, "Let's get a sax player". We advertised in the Melody Maker and this Canadian guy [John 'Boy' Lennard] comes in with leather strides and a big fedora and blew over the top of what we were doing. He just fitted. I listen back to the original recordings and it sounds almost avant-garde. I could never have imagined a band like that, but it happened, which was incredible. The name had nothing to do with Antonin Artaud's Theatre Of Cruelty.

In that rehearsal room we caught something that provoked a lot of reaction. We'd done our first gig supporting Athletico Spizz 80 at the Marquee, and the next one was at the Moonlight Club in West Hampstead, and there were hundreds of people queuing down the street. A bit later The Ruts were in the next room at the Sunday School, and they bundled in – we thought it was gonna be a gang fight, but they were just curious about what the hell this was. Then they asked us to go on tour round the country with them. It was brilliant. This wasn't some bunch of morbid bastards in a basement! This was a fun band, a great laugh, and we really took it on.

Getty (2), Retna/Avalon

> "This wasn't some bunch of morbid bastards in a basement."
> **KIRK BRANDON**

GOODBYE CHRISTMAS 1982

The things you can do when you're young, slim and dim. Fucking hell, there was so much crammed into 18 months. We played over 200 shows in the first year. Ian Dury asked us to go on tour, we went on tour with The Clash in the UK and Europe, Mick Jones produced [1982 debut LP] *Westworld*, Billy [Duffy, guitar] was with us for the last six months, and Nigel [Preston, drums] was phenomenal. You're in your twenties doing something you always wanted to do with some great, funny people and it only ever sped up – this frenzied lifestyle of, in a van, on a plane, in a van, on a plane, in the studio, on a stage, back in the van, repeat.

The gigs were always great, there was no dragging corpses around, but at the end there were a lot of very messy and confused things going on internally, in the band, a lot of disquiet about decisions the manager was making. People got confused about where the band was going, and some people were experimenting with pharmaceuticals. You know, there were these guys on the dole and banging about in squats or whatever, and the next minute they're on TV three times in two weeks. But, how shall I say, financially nothing had changed. We did a second Theatre Of Hate album, *Aria Of The Devil*, but it was never released, and we were booked to start an American tour, but the band blew out just before and broke up. The last meeting was at the Sunday School. I liken it to a rocket – it went straight up and came straight back down.

You got out the other side of it and you didn't know who you were anymore. Afterwards I was hanging about, sharing a flat with Stanley in Chelsea, and then we did Spear Of Destiny. The name was Stanley's idea, I wanted to call it Russian State Circus, which made sense to me at the time. It was definitely a turning point – you couldn't repeat Theatre Of Hate. You find one post-punk, art, avant-garde band like that but you're not gonna find another one.

There was so much promise in that band, and if we'd stayed together a little bit longer it would have changed everybody's lives, in a good way. But we've revived the Theatre Of Hate thing since, and everyone has been involved. It's still there, that same spirit.

As told to Ian Harrison

Kirk Brandon plays the WestWorld Weekend XVIII in Wolverhampton in October. Theatre Of Hate's A Thing Of Beauty is out now.

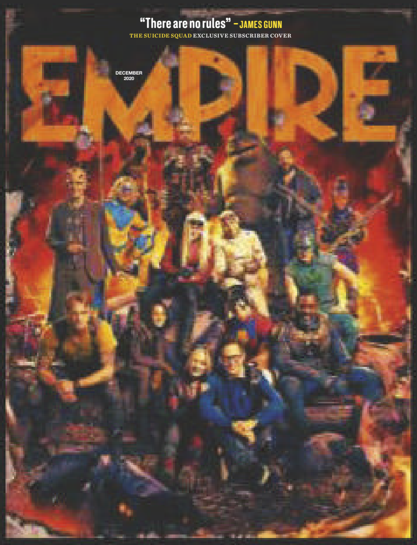
With early drummer Luke Rendle (front); (left) Brandon today.

BECOME AN EMPIRE VIP SUBSCRIBER

EMPIRE VIP CLUB

VIP PERKS INCLUDE:

JUST £79 A YEAR*


"There are no rules" – JAMES GUNN
EMPIRE

13 ISSUES OF EMPIRE MAGAZINE

Delivered directly to your door, with bespoke covers

THE EMPIRE SPOILER SPECIAL PODCAST

THE EMPIRE SPOLER SPECIAL PODCAST

Filmmakers and Team Empire dig into the new releases. PLUS 100+ episode archive

Picture house
MEMBER
12345678910

12-MONTH PICTUREHOUSE MEMBERSHIP

2 free tickets, 20% off food and drink and more

PLUS EXCLUSIVE VIP CLUB EVENTS

FIND OUT MORE AT: EMPIREONLINE.COM/VIP

*When you pay by recurring payment. We can currently offer Empire VIP to UK customers only.

JOHN LENNON/PLASTIC ONO BAND
THE ULTIMATE COLLECTION - DELUXE BOX SET

WAR IS OVER!
IF YOU WANT IT
Love and Peace from John & Yoko
Who are the Plastic Ono Band?
YOU ARE THE PLASTIC ONO BAND
CD One
JOHN LENNON/PLASTIC ONO BAND
THE ULTIMATE MIXES
ALBUM & SINGLES

COMPLETELY REMIXED FROM THE ORIGINAL MULTITRACKS
FEATURING JOHN LENNON, YOKO ONO, RINGO STARR, KLAUS VOORMANN,
GEORGE HARRISON, ERIC CLAPTON, BILLY PRESTON, ALAN WHITE AND PHIL SPECTOR.

6 CDS & 2 BLU-RAY AUDIO DISCS - 159 NEW MIXES - OVER 11 HOURS OF AUDIO.
BLU-RAY MIXES IN HI-RES 192/24 STEREO, 5.1 SURROUND AND DOLBY ATMOS.
132 PAGE HARDBACK BOOK, WAR IS OVER POSTER AND 2 POSTCARDS.

ALSO AVAILABLE: 2 CD, 1 CD, 2 LP, DOWNLOAD AND STREAMING.

OUT NOW

LENONO MUSIC
UMC